

BILL ANALYSIS

S.C.R. 17
By: Madla
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In recognition of both the direct and indirect revenues that could be generated for the state by a robust wine industry, Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst charged the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations of the 78th Legislature to study and make recommendations relating to the development of the Texas wine industry, assess the impact of state and federal laws on the shipment and delivery of wine, and make recommendations for increasing the economic impact of the wine producing industry in Texas.

The Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations found that Texas has all the elements necessary to be a competitive force in the national and international wine industries; the Texas wine producing industry could prove to be a stellar economic generator for the state, and with the proper policies in place, the industry is positioned to boom within the next five to 10 years.

Although progress has been made through the years, insufficient funding and budget reductions for new and existing education, training, and research hinder the development of the industry; moreover, the lack of a consistent, coordinated, and centralized effort among industry stakeholders and public policy makers to develop appropriate programs and policies, to explore, develop, and access relevant funding streams, and to communicate concerns and needs to appropriate parties impedes the development of this industry to its full potential.

It has been shown by the world's major wine producing regions that investment into education and research creates an unparalleled advantage.

Expansion of the Texas wine industry will require an influx of professional talent and expertise, particularly in the specialized fields of wine production and vineyard development.

Nationwide, only universities in California and Washington State offer four-year undergraduate degree programs in viticulture or enology.

Testimony at the October 6, 2004, hearing of the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations indicated that there are individuals and organizations ready, willing, and able to assist with the development of viticulture and enology education, but there is no specific undergraduate or graduate degree program in which to vest their support.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully encourage Texas A&M University, Texas Tech University, Grayson County College T.V. Munson Viticulture and Enology Center, and other Texas institutions of higher education offering education and research opportunities in viticulture and enology to collaborate to develop a world class education and research program within the State of Texas.

That the efforts of this collaboration be reported to the members of the legislature not later than the opening day of the 80th Legislative Session.

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That the Texas secretary of state forward an official copy of this resolution to the chairman of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.