
DIGEST

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HB 715 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Deshotel

Abstract: Requires aerial applicators operating at publicly owned airports or landing fields use radios and transponders as a means of communicating with airport traffic services.

Present law prohibits any city, town, or political subdivision that owns or manages airports from discriminating against aerial applicators licensed by the Dept. of Agriculture for aerial application of seeds, fertilizers, or pesticides, provided the applicators follow all safety and operational regulations set by the airport or the Dept. of Transportation and Development.

Proposed law retains present law and clarifies the name of Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry.

Present law requires that if an airport authority objects to a licensed aerial applicator using its facilities, the Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry, upon request, must inspect and monitor the site before, during, and after application for any harmful chemicals and other residues remain as a result of the use by the aerial applicator. Authorizes the commissioner to suspend the applicator from further airport use if violations are found.

Proposed law retains present law.

Proposed law requires that any aerial applicator using a publicly owned airport or participating in an airport priority program operate a functioning aircraft transponder meeting federal aviation standards, including ADS-B Out or Mode C, and maintain an operable two-way radio for communication with airport traffic or advisory services. Limits the transponder and radio requirements to aircraft operations during takeoff or landing to ensure public safety and coordinate airport surface and traffic operations. Further requires an aerial applicator operating at a publicly owned airport without a control tower to follow the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) recommended standard traffic pattern, unless safety, wind, runway, or aircraft performance considerations require deviation, or the pilot is directed otherwise by air traffic control or FAA guidance.

(Amends R.S. 2:135.3(Section heading), (A), and (B))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development to the original bill:

1. Make technical changes.