

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 28, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to request your immediate assistance in ensuring a healthy and plentiful food supply in the United States.

As has been reported in Time Magazine, our nation's honeybee population is dramatically declining. Since 1947, we have lost about 3.5 million honeybee colonies and roughly 10 million beehives with an estimated value of \$2 billion. A recent national survey shows the decline continuing with over 30 percent of colonies lost annually. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), honeybee pollination is responsible for about *one-third of the human diet*. In addition, pollination adds more than \$20 billion in economic value to our nation's crops.

While we appreciate the work of the USDA-led Bee Health Committee and the various federal agencies responsible for bee health research, we believe more needs to be done before it is too late. We respectfully request that your fiscal year 2015 budget request include significant additional resources for research activities in the laboratory and in the field to address the decline in honeybee populations.

Specifically, we hope that the budget includes increased honeybee research funding at the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), including for cooperator arrangements with universities, and National Institute of Food and Agriculture. In addition, we believe it is important that the Economic Research Service have the needed resources to undertake an official study to establish the economic value of honeybees. An economic analysis of this type will help policymakers better understand the value of honeybees and prioritize federal resources accordingly.

It is our understanding that despite often-dire circumstances facing our nation's beekeepers, the federal investment in research and development to combat the decline in bee health has increased less than \$2.5 million from fiscal year 2007 to fiscal year 2013 at ARS. From our perspective, this is woefully inadequate to address the current situation, particularly since the 2008 and 2014 farm bills have placed heightened emphasis on this issue. We hope that your fiscal year 2015 budget reflects the seriousness of the problem by dedicating resources more in line with what should be expected of a research agenda seeking to protect one-third of the nation's food supply.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to working with you to address to decline in our nation's bee population.

Sincerely,


MARCY KAPTUR
Member of Congress


ALCEE L HASTINGS
Member of Congress


JOHN CONYERS
Member of Congress


SANDER LEVIN
Member of Congress


PETER DEFAZIO
Member of Congress


LOUISE SLAUGHTER
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JIM MORAN
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ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
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