

Maine State Beekeepers Association President's Public Hearing Testimony for LD 1323

Given by Beth Goodwin, President of the Maine State Beekeepers Association
April 15, 2025

Good afternoon Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee. Thank you for bringing LD 1323 forward. My name is Beth Goodwin. I live in Wells, and I am President of the Maine State Beekeepers Association. I am here today ~~speaking for MSBA members, and more so~~ for Maine's official State Insect, *Apis mellifera*, also known as the adorable Honey Bee.

Maine honey bees produce tens of thousands of pounds of honey that is sold throughout the state and hundreds of pounds of beeswax that is used in making lotions, lip balms and other personal care products. In terms of food production, the Xerxes Society reports that 1 in 3 bites of food are the result of animal assisted pollination. So it is easy to see the direct line (a bee line if you will) between honey bees, crop pollination, and food security.

Neonic pesticides work by binding the nerve cells of bees, disrupting their central nervous systems, and causing paralysis and death. Honey bees will forage for pollen and nectar up to five miles from their hive. The greater the source of forage, the greater number of bees that will visit. When they visit corn, or hops, or potatoes or berries that are treated with neonics they may avoid these plants altogether and therefore not help in the pollination and subsequent production of the corn or berries, or if they do visit the plants, the pollen they gather will be brought back to the hive, made into bee bread and fed to the larvae and baby bees exposing the whole colony to this poison.

You have probably seen the bumper sticker that says 'No Farms No Food'. With the application of neonics, the problem is no bees no food.

You may also be familiar with Swans Honey, the well-known company that has been producing honey bees and providing crop pollination services in Maine for more than 70 years. In 1975, when the Maine legislature was considering a bill to make the honey bee the state insect, Hilda Swan gave testimony in support of the bill. She was asked why the honey bee is so important and replied, "Honey bees are the angels of agriculture". After that there were no more questions and the vote to approve was unanimous.

50 years later, Maine beekeepers return to Augusta to address the Committee and provide information in support of honey bees. We ask that the use of neonicotinoids, a poison that is deadly to bees, be banned.

Thank you all your efforts and for your consideration.