

Beekkeeping For Political Change:

As a beekeeper, you have a vested interest in local or federal policies that affect your hive, policies on pesticide use and habitat management. Many beekeepers are not aware that they are a special stakeholder in current pollinator protection policies and action occurring around the globe. In fact, several beekeepers and beekeeping organizations were invited to the White House to discuss pollinator strategies. The type of policy reform that beekeepers can advocate depends upon a number of factors, but the most important is getting involved.

Get involved in your local Beekeeping Organization:

Enact Local Beekeeping Policies. Whether you're a novice or veteran beekeeper, you'll want to get involved. In many areas, past misperceptions about bees spurred zoning restrictions on where or how many hives are allowed on certain properties. Check with your local government or state beekeeping organization for details. If your locality doesn't allow beekeeping, it's time for policy change. Engage your local elected officials to work on passing new beekeeping policies or repeal outdated bee restrictions.

Create and Support Pollinator Habitat Initiatives. Once beekeeping policies are in place allowing local beekeeping, the next step is ensuring that native pollinator forage and habitat are available in your community. Pollinator habitat has the dual benefit of improving pollination in nearby farms, gardens, and wildlife habitat. Not only are local gardens and parks ideal to plant native pollinator friendly flower and grasses, but also areas along roadways and other transportation rights-of-way. Encourage your neighbors, homeowner's association (HOA), or local city government to include pollinator habitat in their landscape man-

agement. It is important that decision makers understand that pesticide use in these areas is detrimental to bees. Pollinator-friendly landscapes can provide year-round habitat for pollinators and require minimal disturbance. They also significantly reduce mowing and maintenance costs to municipalities and states. Additionally, if you live in an agricultural region, ensure that your area has a conservation reserve program. This is a federal program aimed at providing havens for pollinators in areas with high agricultural pressures. Contact your local USDA office to ensure that habitat is being provided. See also Beyond Pesticides' page on managing landscapes with pollinators in mind for additional recommendations: <http://bit.ly/PollinatorLandscapes>.

Pass a Pesticide-Free Policy. Beekeepers have a unique voice to lend to this discussion, and can bolster efforts by residents that are simply concerned about the decline of honey bees. Passing the BEE Protective campaign's Model Community Pollinator Resolution (<http://bit.ly/modelBEEpolicy>) means that your community recognizes the importance of honey bees and other wild pollinators. To that end, it institutes protections for these critical species by halting the purchase and use of neonicotinoid pesticides in your community. The resolution also contains an educational component that encourages private citizens and the broader community to



adopt organic, pollinator-friendly practices and also forgo purchasing or applying neonicotinoid pesticides. Contact Beyond Pesticides for assistance in drafting a policy and working to get it passed.

Getting Your Message in the Media:

Until the Model Community Pollinator Resolution is passed in your community, it is up to beekeepers and concerned citizens to educate local leaders on the importance of adopting pollinator friendly practices. There are a number of ways beekeepers can put the pressure on community leaders to enact necessary changes.

The press loves bees, and people in bee outfits. Gather the science and the data you need (you can use beeprotective.org for materials), put on your suit, and make a call to community newspapers. Don't forget to make sure your hive is ready for its close up! Pictures of you with your hive in your bee suit and a full frame covered with bees can make a big impression on residents and decision makers.



Host an event. Gather together with local or state beekeeping organizations and community leaders to host an event featuring the importance of bees. You could present an introduction on becoming a beekeeper, invite experts from nearby universities to talk about the need for pollinators, and provide an overview of the threats to bees with a question and answer session. Observation hives and honey extractions are a great ways to introduce children to the issue and make it a family event.

Start a Website. Keep a blog on Wordpress or through Google Sites that can act as a focal point for education and outreach in your community. Also consider starting a Facebook, Twitter, or petition through a site like change.org to direct social media action to elected officials.

Reach Out. Broaden your coalition to as many people as you can get involved in the cause. Talk to local environmental groups and sympathetic local government agencies, like nature centers and parks. And of course don't hesitate to reach out to state and national groups like Beyond

Talking Up the Science and the Facts About Bee Declines

The science behind the link between neonicotinoid pesticides and honey bee and other wild pollinator declines has become increasingly clear. Authoritative studies continue to find that these insecticides, either acting individually or synergistically, have both acute and sublethal chronic impacts on honey bees which affect their immune system functioning, behavior, navigation, and colony longevity. This is especially important because bees contribute \$15 billion annually to the U.S. economy and are responsible for 1 in 3 bites of food. Bees can become exposed to these chemicals through direct contact from home or commercial pesticide applicators, contaminated guttation (dew) droplets, pollen, and nectar (even on so called bee-friendly garden plants pre-poisoned by big box department stores and nurseries) and in agricultural areas through contaminated field dust from neonic-coated seeds.

Pesticides, who can provide educational materials and additional organizing strategies to help move your efforts forward.

Enforcement:

Pesticides can impair bee colonies through both acute and chronic impacts. Signs of an acute bee kill—large numbers of dead or dying, twitching bees outside the hive or sudden drops in hive population—will energize anyone concerned about pollinator health.

Reporting. Beekeepers must act quickly to report a bee kill to their state pesticide control agency, which is responsible for enforcing U.S. pesticide law. Regional EPA offices and EPA Headquarters should also be contacted to let the agency know you've reported this incident to state officials. If you know the pesticide associated with the kill, report that information to the manufacturer. Contact local, state, and regional beekeeping organizations, which should be able to assist in responding to your bee kill.



Data Collection. Gather as much information as soon as possible after a bee kill occurs. Data to collect includes photos, videos, the date and time, weather conditions such as wind direction, speed, temperature and humidity at the time of the kill, information

about the type of pesticide applied and the manner and location in which it was applied (backpack, truck, aerial, etc), and details about the pesticide applicator involved, such as organizational affiliation. If you know of a lab that tests pesticide residues, or even if you don't, freeze both dead and dying, twitching bees for sampling. Write all of this information down, and include a history of the hive and its health to provide to state agency investigators. Make sure witnesses and those familiar with the hive are present when investigators arrive on the scene.

In 2013, EPA released new label guidelines for pesticides; however, these measures have been widely criticized by beekeepers and environmental groups as not going far enough. Effective protection of honey bees will not be obtained through regulations for labels that are often not read, allow the use of older labels, and continue to permit neonicotinoid applications, despite data showing that the chemicals impact bees at infinitesimally low levels. Efforts are moving forward in Congress to pass the *Saving America's Pollinators Act*, which would prohibit the use of neonicotinoid insecticides for two years while additional studies are conducted. Real change must come from the grassroots, and beekeepers can play a special role as advocates, sharing concerns and from experience that matter.

Contact Info for Pesticide Emergencies:

State Pesticide Regulatory Agency: <http://bit.ly/BPstates>

Regional EPA: <http://bit.ly/EPAregions>

State and Local Beekeeping Organization Contacts: <http://bit.ly/beesources>

Report Via Email: beekill@epa.gov

(Please CC Beyond Pesticides: info@beyondpesticides.org)

Report Via National Pesticide Information Center: <http://pi.ace.orst.edu/erep>



BEE Protective

Beekeeping Policies

Advocacy information for backyard and commercial beekeepers

Beekeepers are facing numerous challenges in raising healthy bees. From widespread pesticide use to loss of habitat, the survival of bees and beekeeping is increasingly under threat.

Both commercial and backyard beekeepers must be wary of a wide range of issues surrounding their hive(s).

Beekeepers must:

- Avoid nontarget pesticide exposure. This involves moving hives if pesticides are to be sprayed;
- Have safe and plentiful food and forage for their hive, and;
- Manage relationships between neighbors, farmers, and government officials.

Beyond Pesticides works with beekeepers, both small and large, to advance policy changes at the local and state level to prevent acute and chronic bee die-offs, and increase pollinator-friendly habitat. In the absence of adequate federal policy to protect managed honey bees, beekeepers have an important voice in protecting critical beneficial pollinators.



BEYOND PESTICIDES

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