



**LEAD for Pollinators, Inc.**

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May 14, 2020

**Ohio House Civil Justice Committee**

**Proponent Written Testimony: Re: H.B. 496 Apiary Owners Immunity**

Dear Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 496- Apiary Owners Immunity.

Ohio's beekeeping industry consists of over 5,800 beekeepers. Ohio beekeepers provide pollination services to help our food security, and have a positive economic impact on the small businesses that support Ohio beekeepers. This bill will help provide protection for individual beekeepers from legal actions due to unknown stinging insects. HB 496 would not apply to intentional tortious conduct or acts of omission due to gross negligence on the part of the beekeeper. The Best Management Practices (BMPs) set forth by the Ohio Department of Agriculture are a guide for beekeepers to be good neighbors and practice good animal husbandry.

Managed honey bees, and the nearly 4,000 species of native pollinators in North America are responsible for ensuring crop yields of our fruits, nuts, vegetables, and seed crops. One third of an Ohioans' food is made possible by pollinators.

Eleven of Ohio's eighteen biggest cash crops rely on insect pollination to produce that crop: cucumbers, pumpkins, peppers, peaches, cabbage, strawberries, squash, apples, tomatoes, alfalfa/clover hay, and maple syrup reap more than \$600M in pollination services by honey bees and native pollinators. The USDA- Agricultural Marketing Service, April 27, 2020, reported, "The state's honey price averaged \$4.49 per pound, up \$1.25 from last year. Value of production totaled \$15.3 million."

The general public often has difficulty identifying the insect world around us, whether an insect is a yellow jacket, wasp, honey bee, carpenter bee, or bumble bee. This bill will alleviate legal concerns for

*Our mission is to provide leadership, education, action, and development to support the health and sustainability of honey bees, native pollinators, and the keepers of the ecosystem.*

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beekeepers practicing Best Management Practices in beekeeping in their backyard, at community gardens, at educational bee yards, and in the provision of pollination services for Ohio's crops. HB 496 will protect beekeepers of managed pollinators as they provide pollination services to our food supply, our communities, and the Ohio landscape from legal actions due to unknown stinging insects.

We support the passage of HB 496.

Sincerely,



Michele Colopy, Executive Director  
LEAD for Pollinators, Inc.

Richard Reikowski  
Akron, OH beekeeper

Brent Wesley, CEO/Founder  
Akron Honey Co.

Laura Urban  
Urban Honey Bee

Emily Mueller, owner  
Mueller Honey Bee

Bill Starrett  
2019 Ohio Beekeeper of the Year

Sabrena Schweyer, FAPLD  
Vice President, Salsbury-Schweyer, Inc.

Trent Balduff  
Have A Hive

Dr. Randall J. Mitchell  
Research Biologist

Ann Cicarella  
Landscape Design LLC

Attorney Eric S. McDaniel

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# WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: May 22, 2020 \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Michele Colopy \_\_\_\_\_

Are you representing: Yourself \_\_\_\_\_ Organization  \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (If Applicable): LEAD for Pollinators, Inc. \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: Executive Director \_\_\_\_\_

Address: 1624 Idlewood Ave. \_\_\_\_\_

City: Akron State: OH Zip: 44313 \_\_\_\_\_

Best Contact Telephone: 330-803-3449 Email: [execdir@leadforpollinators.org](mailto:execdir@leadforpollinators.org)

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 496 \_\_\_\_\_

Specific Issue: Apiary Owners Immunity Bill \_\_\_\_\_

Are you testifying as a: Proponent  Opponent \_\_\_\_\_ Interested Party \_\_\_\_\_

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? I am submitting my testimony, and support of others in writing, I will not appear in person due to the current social distancing guidelines.

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

Ohio's beekeepers, landscape designers, bumble bee researchers, and more support the passage of HB 496.

*Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.*

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