



LEAD for Pollinators, Inc.

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May 22, 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, and discuss its importance to education and Ohio tourism.

Ohio's beekeeping industry consists of over 5,800 beekeepers, not only for the pollination services provided by the honey bees, but also for the positive economic impact on the small businesses that support Ohio beekeepers. This bill will help provide protection for individual beekeepers and educational destination venues in Ohio 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 define standards for beekeepers to be good neighbors and practice.

Educational destination venues in Ohio, such as Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Aullwood Audubon Center & Farm, Cleveland Botanical Garden, Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, Crown Point Ecology Center, and the grounds of the Ohio State House, all feature live honey bee hives on their public property. These botanical gardens and working farms also educate Ohioans about the diversity of pollinators and their importance to a healthy ecosystem. These entities will benefit from HB 496. These on-site bee hives are educational, and support the plants, floral-scapes, gardens, and farmland at all of these tourist and community supported destination venues. These venues typically generate more than \$15M in tourism activities across Ohio. HB 496 will provide comfort and security to Ohio's educational destination venues.

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.

LEAD for Pollinators is fiscally sponsored by Cleveland Pollinator and Native Plants, Inc. a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

We encourage you to support HB 496 for education, food production, and tourism.

Sincerely,

Michele Colopy

Executive Director

LEAD for Pollinators, Inc.

Laurie Cothran

Development and Marketing Manager

Aullwood Audubon, Dayton, Ohio

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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

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 educational and tourism venues that include honey bees on site, and provide education about the value of pollination support the passage of HB 496, the Apiary Owners Immunity Bill.

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.