



Ohio State Beekeepers Association

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May 15, 2018

Re: H.B. 392- Apiary Owners Immunity

Dear Chairperson, Senator Bob Hackett, Vice Chairperson, Senator Frank Hoagland, Ranking Minority Member, Senator Sean O'Brien, and Senators Bill Beagle, Stephanie Kunze, Frank LaRose, Rob McColley, Bob Peterson, Michael Skindell, Charleta Tavares, and Joe Uecker:

Ohio must continue to help strengthen Ohio's beekeeping industry of over 7,800 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 392 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 set forth by the Ohio State Beekeepers Association are a guide for beekeepers to be good neighbors, practice good animal husbandry, and as a guide for local ordinances. Every commodity group follows the BMPs for their specific crop or livestock.

Managed honey bees, and the nearly 4,000 species of native pollinators in North America are responsible for ensuring crop yields in 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.¹ Total Ohio honey value in 2016 was \$4,550,000.

Educational destination venues in Ohio, such as Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Aullwood Audubon Center & Farm, Cleveland Botanical Garden, and the grounds of the Ohio State House, all feature live honey bee hives on their public property. These entities will also benefit from HB 392. 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 generate \$14,185,632 in tourism activities across Ohio.

HB 392 will provide comfort and security to Ohio's educational destination venues.

Sincerely,

Michele Colopy, Treasurer
Ohio State Beekeepers Association, Inc.



Laurie Cothran, Development & Marketing Manager
Aullwood Audubon Center & Farm



Jenny Pope, Director of Community Outreach & Education
Franklin Park Conservatory & Botanical Gardens



Jill Koski, President & CEO
Cleveland Botanical Garden/Holden Forests & Gardens



¹ The Buckeye State's 18 biggest cash crops,

http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2016/11/homegrown_ohio_the_states_big.html