



*Pollinator Stewardship Council*

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**H.R. 5447 misses the target**

H.R. 5447 (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hr5447ih/pdf/BILLS-113hr5447ih.pdf>) was recently introduced in the House of Representatives. This bill would amend FIFRA to expedite registration of pesticides to improve pollinator bee health “and for other purposes.” The bill is directed toward “parasitic pests” of honey bees—the Varroa mite. The Pollinator Stewardship Council is appreciative of Rep. Austin Scott acknowledging the perils of honey bees, and the damages inflicted upon the beekeeping industry by the Varroa mite. Unfortunately, H.R. 5447 misses the target. We cannot support it in its current form.

There is a critical need for new Varroa mite control approaches, the Pollinator Stewardship Council is concerned fast-tracking a new mite-control product will miss the safeguards US EPA developed to protect the food supply (honey) from contamination, the ecosystem, and honey bees. We do not want a “medicine” that is worse than the ailment. Before a new mite control product can be fast-tracked through the regulatory system, it must be carefully developed and tested for unintended consequences. The Pollinator Stewardship Council urges Congress to aggressively fund honey bee mite control research through NIFA, ARS, and the National Science Foundation.

H.R. 5447 asks USDA to produce a report on the “scope and threat to the health of managed pollinator bees from”—pathological factors, other arthropod pests, diseases,

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environmental factors, “including habitat, forage, beekeeper practices and husbandry, and nutritional needs of managed pollinators.” The Pollinator Stewardship Council thanks Rep. Austin Scott for directing the USDA, through this legislation, to investigate some factors related to bee health, including environmental, habitat, and forage. However, we are concerned H.R. 5447 did not specifically direct and fund EPA to investigate the effects of pesticides on bee health.

There is increasing evidence from research labs and beekeeper apiaries agricultural pesticides of the neonicotinoid class compromise the immune system of bees. The Pollinator Stewardship Council urges Congress to direct US EPA to accelerate the timeline for the re-registration decision of neonic class of pesticides. A moratorium\* must be placed on their use on bee attractive plants, until the science can be reviewed; and, treated seeds must be declared a pesticide application. (*\*definition of “moratorium” -- “a planned activity is postponed.”*)

US EPA needs to fully understand the synergistic effects of mixtures of pesticides. Many agricultural chemicals, Insect growth Regulators, and fungicides were registered under outdated risk assessment methods. There is increasing evidence mixing pest control chemicals increases toxicity. Substantially increased toxicity to honey bees has been observed for mixtures of fungicides and /or Insect Growth Regulators classified as “bee safe.”

Concerning language in H.R. 5447 are four words: “*and for other purposes.*” These four words in the bill provide an “open door” for the registration of additional pesticides that may be problematic for honey bees and native pollinators.

We strongly urge Congress to fully fund honey bee research, and fund research on crop pest control systems that protect crops, honey bees, and native pollinators.

**Neonicotinoids Let Virus Thrive in Bees** <http://www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/2013/10/neonicotinoids-let-virus-thrive-bees-colony-collapse-disorder>

**Neonicotinoid clothianidin adversely affects insect immunity and promotes replication of a viral pathogen in honey bees** <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/10/18/1314923110>

**Pesticide Mixtures have Damaging Affects on Bees**  
<http://extension.psu.edu/pests/ipm/news/2013/pesticide-mixtures-have-damaging-affects-on-bees>

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**Effects of insect growth regulators on honey bees and non-Apis bees. A review**  
<http://www.apidologie.org/articles/apido/pdf/2001/06/tasei.pdf>

**Bees Exposed to Fungicide More Vulnerable to *Nosema* Parasite**  
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2013/130724.htm>

**Pesticides, fungicides harming bee colonies, UM study says**  
[http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2013-07-26/features/bs-md-bee-death-study-20130726\\_1\\_pollen-um-study-nosema](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2013-07-26/features/bs-md-bee-death-study-20130726_1_pollen-um-study-nosema)

**A multi-year field study evaluating the environmental fate and agronomic effects of insecticide mixtures**  
[http://pollinatorstewardship.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Whiting-et-al\\_2014\\_A-multi-year-field-study-evaluating-the-environmental-fate-and-agronomic-effects-of-insecticide-mixtures\\_-includes-clothianidin\\_SciTotEnv.pdf](http://pollinatorstewardship.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Whiting-et-al_2014_A-multi-year-field-study-evaluating-the-environmental-fate-and-agronomic-effects-of-insecticide-mixtures_-includes-clothianidin_SciTotEnv.pdf)