



MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, INC.

"The Voice of Agriculture"

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July 31, 2015

Dear members of the agricultural community – and other interested parties,.

We are writing to ask for your input on a document that is intended to lay out a framework for the protection of pollinators, including honeybees and other pollinators, in Massachusetts.

There are very few in the agricultural industry who do not rely on crop pollination for the success of their businesses or the health of their farms. We all rely on pollination for our food supply. Pollinator health is a particularly important issue for a large part of the agricultural community, for beekeepers, and for the general public.

Pollinator health has become a national issue. The Administration has highlighted this problem, directed the US EPA to make this a priority issue, and has encouraged states to create a pollinator health strategy. As a result, MA Farm Bureau has spearheaded efforts to bring together a diverse group of individuals to discuss the issue and help create a framework for a state strategy to improve pollinator health.

This group includes representatives from state and county beekeeping associations and agricultural commodity groups. We also recognized that there were others in related businesses, who could impact and be impacted by pollinator health, and should also take part in the conversation. Accordingly, we invited representatives of the nursery industry, lawn care industry, Mosquito Control, and structural pest control to participate as well. In addition, MA DAR, UMass, and several legislators with an interest in pollinators were also invited to participate. Our goal was to include individuals that could represent larger groups with a consensus opinion rather than individuals representing themselves. These participants formed the MA Pollinator Stewardship Group. While many in the group have had discussions on pollinators within their own communities (beekeepers, mosquito control, UMass, etc.) this was the first effort to bring representatives of the various groups together.

The MA Pollinator Stewardship Group was given the relatively straightforward task of developing a framework of what a comprehensive pollinator protection program should look like in Massachusetts. The attached document is a draft of that framework to which the undersigned individuals contributed and agreed to submit to a broader community for further comment.

It is our hope that a document that represents a broad consensus of various stakeholders will help guide the efforts of the government, various industry organizations, UMass, etc. in improving pollinator health, and will foster cooperative efforts between these various entities.

It is important to note that this document does not address any of the specific legislation currently before the MA Legislature. It is designed to work within a system of existing laws and requirements. Should any of these pending bills be adopted in MA, they will become part of the framework under

which we all operate. This document is not intended to support or oppose any specific bills or laws. Please keep this in mind with your comments.

Please send comments by September 15, 2015 to Dr. Richard Bonanno at rich@mfbf.net and copy to Taryn Lascola at taryn.lascola@state.ma.us

Thank You.

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