

MEDIA RELEASE

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Pollinator-Beneficial Farm Bill Amendment Adopted by House During Pollinator Week *Would Help Ensure Viability of Honey Bees, Native Pollinators and Other Beneficial Insects*

San Francisco, CA-The Pollinator Partnership (P2) applauded passage by a bipartisan vote of 273-149 of a pollinator amendment to the farm bill on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives yesterday. If enacted into law, the amendment, authored by Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (FL), and carried by Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (OH) on his behalf, would help ensure the viability of honey bees, native pollinators and other beneficial insects. Representatives Rodney Davis (IL) and Jeff Denham (CA) also were lead supporters of the amendment.

"We applaud Representatives Hastings, Kaptur, Davis and Denham for their critical leadership in achieving this bipartisan outcome during National Pollinator Week," said Laurie Davies Adams, P2 Executive Director. "Even though the House failed to pass a farm bill today, members of the House have recognized through their precedent-setting vote on the amendment that pollinators need more help. We will continue to work with concerned citizens, the Congress and the Administration to find ways to provide that assistance."

"It's simple. No bees, no food," said Congressman Alcee L. Hastings of Florida. "Our pollinating partners are in trouble, and they need our help. My amendment builds on good efforts to date by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) by encouraging interagency cooperation, and directing more attention to honey bee forage needs in USDA conservation programs."

"I greatly appreciate the hard work and leadership involvement of the Pollinator Partnership and other key groups in building bipartisan support for my amendment," Hastings added. "This is most definitely a positive outcome during National Pollinator Week."

"I thank the Pollinator Partnership for its leadership on this issue. The Pollinator Partnership and other key groups are essential to building support in Congress for this important amendment, and we saw the results of that on the House floor," said Congresswoman Kaptur of Ohio.

"As a member of the Pollinator Protection Caucus and an advocate for this research, I was happy to support this bipartisan amendment. We must continue to drive home just how important bees and other pollinators are to getting the nutrition we need, and improving federal coordination to address and promote pollinator health is a great step, said Congressman Rodney Davis of Illinois.

"Dr. May Berenbaum is a world class entomologist at the University of Illinois, which is in the 13th District. She and her team are doing critical work on this problem. We can support the great work being done by May, and the Pollinator Partnership, by passing strong pollinator protection policies," Davis added.

"I was pleased to see the approval of an amendment that improves current and future efforts to support the long-term viability of pollinator bees and other beneficial insects in agriculture. As a Central Valley almond farmer and co-chair of the House Pollinator Caucus, I understand the importance of a healthy apiary industry and its effects on our local agricultural economy," said Congressman Jeff Denham of California.

P2 collaborated with beekeeping organizations and Hastings in shaping the amendment and building support among key stakeholder groups and in the House. Other groups on record in support of the amendment include: American Honey Producers Association, American Beekeeping Federation, American Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Blue Diamond Growers, Florida Farm Bureau, American Farmland Trust, National Wildlife Federation, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever and Center for Food Safety,

The full text of the Hastings amendment is available at <http://pollinator.org/PDFs/HASTFL3.pdf>.

Members of the Congressional Pollinator Protection Caucus (CP2C) played key roles. Co-chairs Hastings and Denham, and CP2C members Kaptur and Davis, were joined by the following caucus members supporting the amendment: Earl Blumenauer (OR), Jim Costa (CA), Rosa DeLauro (CT), Ted Deutch (FL), Bob Goodlatte (VA), Jared Huffman (CA) and Rob Wittman (VA).

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ABOUT THE POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP

Established in 1997, the Pollinator Partnership is the largest 501(c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to the health, protection, and conservation of all pollinating animals. For further information, visit www.pollinator.org!

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Amendment Highlights

- Emphasizes the importance of improving managed honey bee forage in USDA conservation programs;
- Encourages an inter-agency dialogue about pollinator health that includes appropriate sharing of guidance and technical expertise between USDA, Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency;
- Creates a USDA task force on bee health and commercial beekeeping to enhance Federal cooperation relating to preservation of pollinators and the pollination industry;
- Requests regular monitoring and reporting on health and population status of pollinators (including bees, birds, bats, and other species);
- Encourages agencies to utilize the best available peer-reviewed science on environmental and chemical stressors to pollinators, including giving consideration to international efforts addressing pollinator declines; and
- Encourages assessment of honey bee research laboratories at USDA and a feasibility study of collaborative options.