



Tom Cochran
Michigan State Representative
District 67



Rick Hansen
Minnesota State Representative
District 52A

Dear Members of Congress,

We write to emphasize the importance of bees and other pollinators to farmers and the national economy and urge you to oppose provisions that would harm species – including endangered pollinators – in Farm Bill legislation now under development by the U.S. Congress.

Farmers within our states depend on healthy natural ecosystems and pollinators to sustain profitable yields year after year. This is especially important for specialty crop farmers. Native pollinators, including bees, bats, butterflies and birds, contribute an estimated \$3 billion annually in crop pollination services nationally. Together with non-native honey bees, pollinators are estimated to contribute \$15 billion in annual crop pollination throughout the U.S. However, many bee populations, including managed honey bees and wild bees, are in precipitous decline due to a phenomenon known as colony collapse disorder. Studies have identified the use of certain pesticides and other factors as contributing to this phenomenon and the resulting loss of bee populations. Recent peer-reviewed data indicates that native bumble bees, including the endangered rusty patched bumble bee, are particularly harmed by pesticides. Farmers across the country are grappling with this distressing situation and responding by adopting farming practices that reduce negative impacts on bees. Additionally, many state legislatures are responding to these challenges by adopting legislation aimed at boosting pollinator health and protecting pollinator habitat.

Unfortunately, as we work to protect our farmers and pollinators, a section of the House Farm Bill (Title IX, Sections 9111-9116 of H.R. 2) would severely undermine these efforts. The language would exempt the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from key requirements under the Endangered Species Act that protect imperiled species like pollinators when the EPA registers potentially harmful pesticides. Circumventing key requirements for federally listed pollinators like the endangered Karner blue butterfly and the rusty patched bumble bee and allowing the EPA to make self-interested determinations on the effects of pesticides will harm species and disrupt working ecosystems. Instead, we need to be doing all we can to support vulnerable pollinators and help farmers.

Provisions that harm farmers who depend on intact ecosystems and healthy pollinator populations should not be included in the federal Farm Bill. Please oppose efforts to weaken protections for endangered pollinators and other species in the current House Farm Bill and ensure that this short-sighted provision, which benefits pesticide companies at the expense of farmers and our environment, is not part of the Senate Farm Bill.

Signed,

Representative Tom Cochran
Michigan

Representative Susan Almy
New Hampshire

County Commissioner Glenn Anderson
Michigan

Representative Rick Hansen
Minnesota

Delegate Steve Lafferty
Maryland

Senator Chris Larson
Wisconsin

Representative Marti Anderson
Iowa

Representative Nickie Antonio
Ohio

Representative Donna Bailey
Maine

Former Representative Robert Beavets
Maine

House Majority Leader KC Becker
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