

The Honorable Herb Kohl, Chairman  
SD-131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Bennett, Ranking Member  
SD-131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Subcommittee on Agriculture  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kohl and Ranking Member Bennett,

We are writing to request that the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee allocate \$20 million in Fiscal Year 2009 funding for honeybee and pollinator research projects. These funds will go a long way to provide sustainable research and combat Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) in managed honeybees. The President's budget proposal only includes an increase of \$780,000 from FY2008 for CCD.

As you know, the Senate-passed version of the farm bill includes language authorizing \$100 million over five years for CCD and pollinator related research initiatives. We feel that the vital role pollination services play in the nation's agricultural industry merits a FY2009 appropriation in line with the levels authorized in the farm bill.

As former U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns starkly warned in June of 2007, the continued decline in honeybees and emergence of CCD "has the potential to cause a \$15 billion direct loss of crop production and \$75 billion in indirect losses." Pollinators are responsible for the production of one-third of the nation's food supply, yet Federal support of pollinator and honeybee health research has historically been unreflective of the importance of pollination.

We have taken for granted the indispensable services honeybees and other pollinators provide our nation. The number of managed honeybee colonies in the U.S. has dropped in half since 1960, while demand for their services in agriculture has continued to grow. Ninety percent of the nation's existing hives are predicted to be needed to pollinate California's 2012 almond crop alone. In other states, farmers who produce apples, melons, berries, peaches, squash, and many other fruits and vegetables depend on healthy pollinators.

Because of the importance of honeybees/pollinators in the production of the nation's food supply and their impact on the stability of our agricultural economy, it is essential that the Federal government help establish sustainable, long-term, research initiatives dedicated to protecting pollinator health and finding immediate solutions to CCD.

With a \$20 million investment this year in CCD and pollinator health research, we can begin to take steps toward providing the scientific community with the resources it needs to pursue vital investigations into the complex pollinator systems that our nation's agricultural activities are dependant upon.

With broad consensus from farmers, beekeepers, scientists and legislators on the need to fund pollinator research, we hope your Subcommittee will see the appropriation as more than a justifiable expenditure, and make a decisive investment in the future and safety of our nation's food supply.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

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BARBARA BOXER  
United States Senator

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ROBERT P. CASEY  
United States Senator

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