

To the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

As a family owned and sustainable beekeeping business in Portland, Oregon, Bee Thinking urges you to support the Oregon Pollinator Protection Act (SB 929).

Bee Thinking is Portland's only fast growing, family-owned beekeeping supply company, supporting backyard and hobbyist beekeepers in urban and rural settings alike. We have seen burgeoning growth of beekeeping in urban areas, and the use of pesticides like neonicotinoids in these settings endangers the growth of not only healthy honeybee populations, but also our business, which provides dozens of jobs for Oregon residents.

Bee Thinking believes that the first step towards protecting our honeybee and native bee populations lies within consumer education, and the ability for people to make informed decisions when it comes to their purchases. We have witnessed first hand the growing concern of the general public for pollinator health and related food availability and quality issues. Oregon residents make garden care product purchases in good faith that their local nursery or garden store advocates safe and ethical practices. The Pollinator Protection Act will prevent these everyday consumers from obtaining highly toxic and bio-persistent pesticides they are not qualified to apply properly.

Just this week we received an inquiry from a local customer wondering why her very strong and several years-old honeybee colony survived the entire harsh winter only to die right as blossoms were beginning to pop up. After going through the troubleshooting checklist, we learned one key piece of information: their neighbors had recently and unknowingly sprayed neonics labeled under an unfamiliar name on a pest control product.

In order to save honeybees, we must encourage people to use ethical beekeeping practices outside of the commercial pollination circuit. When beekeepers with one or very few hives lose their colonies in situations like this, they are less likely to try again. Similarly, increased colony losses are discouraging for beginning beekeepers. These potential Bee Thinking customers are less likely to invest in a hobby that has a low chance of success. This would be a devastating blow for our business.

Your support on this legislation will do much to ensure the survival and stability of businesses like Bee Thinking, and bee populations statewide in Oregon.

Sincerely,
Bee Thinking, LLC.

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