



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
WITH FAMILY FARMERS

April 30, 2012

The Honorable Michael Allen
State Capitol, Room 5158
Sacramento, CA 94249-0007

AJR 29—Pollinators -- SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Allen:

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is a statewide organization representing both family farmers and urban residents who support sustainable food and farming policies. We are pleased to support your AJR 29, a resolution encouraging state and federal agencies to protect California's pollinators.

Agriculture is a large contributor to the California economy and its success is helped by professional beekeepers and the pollination services they provide. Migratory beekeepers have worked with farmers by moving their hives seasonally to pollinate a wide variety of crops, including high-value California crops such as almonds, cherries and apples. Poorly pollinated plants produce fewer, often misshapen, fruits and lower yields of seed with inevitable consequences on quality, availability and price of food. With the wild insect pollinator populations already in serious decline, commercial beekeeping is more than ever a vital piece of our agricultural economy and pollinators essential to produce the food the population requires.

Bee colony decline is likely based on a variety of factors, including habitat loss, pathogens and pesticides. In particular, a new class of systemic pesticides called neonicotinoids has been linked to weakening bees' immune systems, and eventual colony decline. AJR 29 encourages California regulators, especially the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, to create a plan for action and a timeline for addressing neonicotinoid pesticides.

Although CAFF does not support a complete ban on neonicotinoid products at this time, we do believe their use should be carefully monitored and such use prohibited where they are likely to have the greatest impact on pollinators. We therefore support the sense of this resolution and urge the regulatory agencies to make the protection of pollinators a high priority in their decision-making. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

David Runsten
Policy Director