

# Government Relations Report

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ABF Vice President

ABF President Gene Brandi and I will be headed to Washington D.C. during National Pollinator Week. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and The U.S. Department of the Interior have designated June 19-25, 2017 as "National Pollinator Week". The schedule of events has not been released as of now, but as in the past there will be multiple activities and programs going on in Washington during the week. Fran Boyd (Meyers and Associates) is currently scheduling meetings with Congressional staffers and members of the Pollinator Caucus for our visit. We will also meet with other agencies during the week.

On April 10th Senator John Thune (R-South Dakota) released legislative language to overhaul the USDA's conservation program. The language is part of many legislative proposals that will be released by members of Congress as they work on the Farm Bill to be completed by 2018.

Thune's proposal includes several changes to the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Maximum acreage administered by the CRP would increase to 30 million acres from the 24 million acres included in the 2014 farm bill. "Light grazing" and the planting of hay would also be allowed on CRP enrolled land according to Thune's proposal.

According to Thune's outline "This provision would provide greater flexibility for the use of land enrolled in CRP, reduce the cost of CRP and eliminate the implementation of emergency haying and grazing of CRP every year"

USDA conservation easement programs will also have changes. Land owners will be allowed to make modifications to land under conservation easement for water management, vegetative cover control, habitat management or other purposes.

Thune also proposed the Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP). It would allow farmers to enroll their least productive acres



into the program for a rental payment and additional crop insurance assistance. This is a short-term program with three to five year options available to farmers.

Senator Thune will be releasing more proposals as work on the 2018 farm bill continues.

In April neonicotinoids were found in treated drinking water for the first time. Engineers and chemists from the University of Iowa and the U.S. Geological Survey reported traces of neonicotinoids in tap water from Iowa City as well as the University of Iowa campus. The concentrations of neonics ranged from .24 to 57.3 nanograms per liter. These concentration levels are considered very low, but regulators have yet to put a safe level of neonics allowed in drinking water.

ABF would like to thank everyone who donated to the legislative fund. To date we have collected over \$11,000.00. If you would like to still donate, you can do so by going to our ABF website and under About ABF, click Donate to the ABF and Foundation. There has been an increasing number of issues that have been effecting the bee industry and your financial help is greatly appreciated.

## Call for Papers/Presentations

### 75th Anniversary 2018 American Beekeeping Federation Conference and Tradeshow

Mark your calendars and save the date for ABF's Annual Conference & Tradeshow, January 9-13, 2018, at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nevada. ABF will be celebrating its 75th diamond anniversary and we plan to celebrate in a magnificent way.

The Call for Presentations is now open. If you have important beekeeping research to share, a best practice in beekeeping or a proven track record with keeping the hives alive, we want to hear from you.

Please complete the Call for Presentations submission form and return to Tara Zeravsky at [tzeravsky@meetingexpectations.com](mailto:tzeravsky@meetingexpectations.com) no later than July 28, 2017. The conference committee will review all

submissions and you will be notified of your participation in early September. As a reminder, all presenters receive complimentary registration to the conference. All other expenses are the responsibility of the presenter.

**Download the 2018 Call for Presentations Submission Form by visiting our website at [www.abfnet.org](http://www.abfnet.org)**

We are looking forward to a brilliant conference full of educational sessions, research presentations, vendor displays, networking and so much more.

We hope you will join us in Reno for what promises to be an illuminating experience.