

# Government Relations Report

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ABF Vice President



As mentioned in the Vice President's message in this newsletter, the release of the National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators and EPA's Proposal to Mitigate Exposure to Bees from Acutely Toxic Pesticide Products has provided the ABF and the entire bee industry with a great deal of thought provoking material in recent weeks. The ABF is working in concert with the American Honey Producers Association to finalize joint industry comments to submit to the docket on the EPA proposal.

EPA is extending the comment period on its proposed plan, which prohibits the use of all highly toxic pesticides when crops are in bloom and bees are present under contract for pollination services.

Initially released on May 29, 2015, the plan also recommends that states and tribes develop Pollinator Protection Plans and best management practices.

The 30-day extension ends on August 28, 2015, and will be announced in the Federal Register. Please visit the regulatory docket, EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0818, to read the plan and submit comments.

Learn more about the proposal by viewing EPA's recording of the June 24 webinar or by viewing the webinar slides: Webinar Slides for EPA's Proposal to Protect Bees from Acutely Toxic Pesticides (PDF).

Learn more about EPA's Actions to Protect Pollinators: <http://www2.epa.gov/pollinator-protection/epa-actions-protect-pollinators>

Several months ago, the ABF and AHPA initiated efforts to establish a memorandum of understanding with the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) in order to provide a closer working relationship between FSA and the beekeeping industry. While this MOU has not yet materialized, it is our hope that it will be of benefit to the bee industry by helping the FSA set priorities on issues relating to bees, and establish better communication, allowing for quicker response to critical issues which impact the bee industry. We will likely attempt to develop additional MOU's with other agencies as well at some point in the future. Given the fact that so many federal agencies now have Pollinator Protection Plans as a result of the Presidential Memorandum, it is important for the bee industry to be at the table with the most influential agencies on a more formal basis.

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