

Government Relations Report

by: *Tim May*
ABF Vice President



In June, ABF President Gene Brandi and myself made two trips to Washington, D.C. As most of you know the first trip was an invitation from 2nd Lady Karen Pence to the ceremony for the unveiling of a bee hive on the residence of the Vice President at the Naval Observatory.

GVW limit on some regulations will be set at 26,000 lbs. rather than the 10,000 lbs. which had been considered.

We had an appointment with Dr. Anne Bartuska from the USDA. Dr. Bartuska is the current go to person regarding bee issues at the USDA and is a carryover from the last administration. She is very concerned with the bee situation and will be very good to work with. We explained how the UC Davis lab was ready to go, but still without a staff. We discussed the new Cast report titled "Why does Bee Health Matter? The Science Surrounding Honey Bee Health Concerns and What We Can Do About It".

The Cast Commentary was a consensus report authored by a combination of scientists, geologists, and beekeepers. The group was led by the University of Minnesota's Dr. Marla Spivak. The complete report is available on the USDA website (Cast Commentary QTA 2017-1).



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Our second trip was during National Pollinator Week. Gene and I along with Fran Boyd (Meyers & Associates) met with Majority and Minority Congressional staffers from the Senate and House Agriculture committees. Once again, we stressed the importance of honeybees and the fact that the health of honeybees and other pollinators is still a concern. We emphasized the importance of the Federal Strategy for Pollinator Protection and how it is bipartisan and should be continued throughout this administration. This was a great week to talk with these committees since it was National Pollinator Week and they all seemed concerned about the situation.

Gene was on a panel for a briefing with the Congressional Pollinator Protector Caucus that was put on by Pollinator Partnership. Gene voiced our concerns to a standing room only audience.

We also were invited by the new Pollinator Partnership CEO, Val Dolcini to attend a reception at the new American Society of Landscape Architect's building in downtown Washington. The building has a green rooftop made up of pollinator friendly plants.

Gene, Fran, and I also met with Jon Samson from the American Trucking Association. We discussed the new electronic logging requirements and hours of service regulations. We have been pushing for bees to be considered livestock. This may give beekeepers some exemptions and extensions to some of the new regulations. The new

We also had a discussion with Peter Narby from Oregon Senator Jeff Merkley's office. Senator Merkley just released the "Pollinator Recovery Act". The Bill will increase pollinator habitat by 3 million acres. It provides incentives to farmers who act to conserve pollinators among other provisions. It also addresses the concerns regarding native bees and other pollinators. More information on this Bill is available at www.merkley.senate.gov.



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