

Dear Sirs:

I am reintroducing testimony I had previously submitted the first time a bill was introduced to keep bees away from roadways. My please is as follows:

I humbly beg that you consider all aspects and potential consequences this bill would have on North Dakota's economy and people if it is approved. My name is Jessica Patino of JP Honey Farms and I am originally from California. Do to the unfortunate drought California has experienced for more than a decade, my family and I relocate to North Dakota every Summer and have made this beautiful state our second home. In 2022, we purchased our very own 40 acre farmstead in the town of Turtle Lake and overwintered there experiencing our first blizzard and the very extreme cold.

Before I try to convince you to vote against this bill, let me speak to you a little about our industry. Beekeeping is a transient business, regardless of the "home state" the beekeeper originates from. The majority of our country's bee hives will be found in California or in potato sheds throughout Idaho during the months of November, December and January. They then make the trip into pollinating California's almond orchards in the month of February followed by citrus in either California or Florida and then they make their way into our beautiful plains. Beehives and beekeepers will be found throughout Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and as far South as Texas. However, there is no state (in my opinion) that compares to North Dakota. Beekeepers, our families and our employees bring an enormous economic boost to this state. We rent homes (year round), lease farmsteads, pay rents on bee yards, buy groceries, go shopping, buy a ridiculous amount of fuel, support local restaurants and the list continues. Our industry also supports local farmers. In producing honey, our bees are also hyper pollinating crops such as canola and sunflower thus increasing yields for the farmers who so generously allow us to place bees on their property.

Typically, farmers and landowners suggest the best placement for our bees. It is usually a small spot that can be easily accessible for us to come in and out of and is also out of the way for their machinery and harvesting equipment. Usually the best spot is also on high ground where the bees will not become flooded during storms. Logically, the person who knows best is the landowner or farmer themselves. With the incredible amount of sloughs found throughout the state, often times these designated areas are near the approach to the farm and close to the roads. However, they are always out of the way to allow passage into and out of the farms, sometimes hidden amongst wind breaks.

If this bill were to pass, you would remove a great percentage of registered bee locations that more than likely do not have an alternate placement. 1/2 mile is a great distance, it is a half section meaning there would be no alternative if a farmer only owns one quarter section of land. It would make it virtually impossible for us to find suitable locations for our bees. This would also result in an over saturation of bees closer to small businesses and homes but 1/2 mile away from a State or Federal highway. This bill has been generated and written using fear mongering. How is a small little honey bee a threat to cars, trucks and semis traveling at 55-75 mph down highways? Before making a decision, I would actually invite you to visit random bee yards this Summer with me. Honey bees are busy working on their pollination and honey production. They are not ruthless creatures waiting to attack their prey and sting humans to death. You can be right next to an apiary and never get stung because a honey bee does not wake up each morning wanting to sting you. Frankly, this bill does not make sense to me. What is the offense? We are not blocking roadways. Please name one vehicle accident that has resulted because a bee flew across the highway. If the homeowner or farmer can live with bee hives in their backyard all summer, why is it difficult for passerby, secured within their vehicles to drive down the highway with our bees around? Are they staining their windows? Is there also a bill being introduced to stop mosquitoes and flies from flying within 1/2 mile of highways as well? If this is the problem, do beekeepers need to start paying a tax for concerned citizens to

pay for their windshield wipers? It sounds absurd. But the writing and introduction of this bill is absurd in and of itself.

North Dakota is better than this. This is a state founded with good principles and a strong emphasis and respect for agriculture. I ask you, what is the problem or purpose of this legislation? Clean windshields? May I recommend a city that will gladly cater to those anti-farming ideologies such as Los Angeles, California? I simply do not know what to say anymore. Is North Dakota going woke? Why are we catering to a few privileged individuals that want to keep their cars clean? Shame on the representatives that introduced this bill. Had you actually introduced legislation such as "1/2 mile from schools" that would make sense. I would applaud that. But you care more about the privileged few that don't want to clean their windshields. How much is being donated into these legislators' pockets to introduce such nonsense into North Dakota legislation? This bill is attempting to destroy an entire industry. Ruin businesses and families. Affecting North Dakotan farmers and their crops. Decimating a vital component to the economy.

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture already has extensive laws we must abide by. The Ag Commissioner is diligent in coming around and inspecting bee hives making sure complaints are minimal. I believe the vast majority of beekeepers are also great at following the rules and in complying with these laws. It takes just one call from Samantha Bruner or her coworkers for a problem to be corrected. If you are unsure on how to vote and feel there is some validity to the bill as written, then I request you please delay the voting of this bill until you have had the opportunity to study the consequences and experience beekeeping this summer. I invite you to drive down roads and highways and take in for yourself if this is truly a problem that merits destroying so much to so many. I volunteer myself to be your guide. I can physically show you the problem with the bill and survey the farms with you to show why and how it just does not make sense. Above all, I plead you to not villainize bees or beekeepers. We have a humble industry and a passion for farming and our community.

Thank you for your time.

Jessica Patino

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