

ALCEE L. HASTINGS  
23RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
FLORIDA

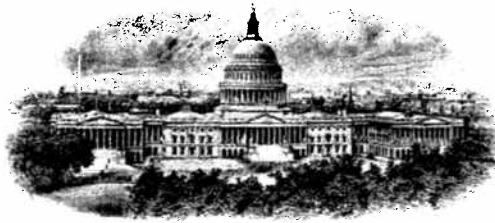
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PLEASE RESPOND TO:

- 2353 RAYBURN BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0923  
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-1313  
FAX: (202) 225-1171
- 2701 W. OAKLAND PARK BOULEVARD  
SUITE 200  
FT. LAUDERDALE, FL 33311  
TELEPHONE: (954) 733-2800  
FAX: (954) 735-9444
- 5725 CORPORATE WAY  
SUITE 208  
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33407  
TELEPHONE: (561) 684-0565  
FAX: (561) 684-3613

[www.alceehastings.house.gov](http://www.alceehastings.house.gov)

**Testimony of the Honorable Alcee L. Hastings  
The Importance of the Pollinator Protection Act and  
Other Policy Responses to North American Pollinator Decline**

**Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans  
Committee on Natural Resources  
United States House of Representatives**

**June 26, 2007**

Chairwoman Bordallo, Ranking Member Brown and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today to testify before you.

I would also like to commend Representatives Dennis Cardoza and Randy Neugebauer of the Agriculture Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture for their recent hearing on another aspect of this growing concern. I applaud this interdisciplinary and collaborative effort among committee leadership of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress to meet the needs of the American people.

Just as swiftly as the emergence of Colony Collapse Disorder among honey bee colonies in many states, a national interdisciplinary coalition—including many of the distinguished panelists that I am honored to testify with today—has emerged to explore policy options to address this grave concern. Examples of the impact of Colony Collapse Disorder and pollinator decline are the vital agricultural exports from Florida—such as citrus, celery, tomatoes, strawberries, and cattle.

Indeed, Colony Collapse Disorder is a problem for agriculture. But it is also a significant problem for our natural resources as whole. This phenomenon is one indicator that our natural processes have gone awry. A coalition that recognizes this connection has emerged out of a larger movement to address the continual decline of North American pollinators. The threat of Colony Collapse Disorder is clear. It is a reflection of wildlife habitat destruction and general environmental degradation, among other factors.

I join you today to discuss one contribution or response to these concerns within the dialogue of honey bee and pollinator decline: H.R. 1709, The Pollinator Protection Act. I

introduced the Pollinator Protection Act on March 26, 2007 as one specific policy response within congressional authority to address Colony Collapse Disorder. Since that time, a bipartisan coalition of some 40 cosponsors, the Florida Department of Agriculture, and the Coevolution Institute have joined me to express their deep concern about Colony Collapse Disorder as one component of the complex web of factors contributing to the decline of North American pollinators.

Significant research continues to be conducted by the Colony Collapse Disorder Working Group, as well as other public-private partnerships and colloquia to address these concerns. For example, Dr. Jamie Ellis, Assistant Professor of Entomology at the Honey Bee Research and Extension Laboratory Department of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida, is one key researcher investigating pollinator decline. Dr. Ellis recently observed that a preliminary investigation of the causes of Colony Collapse Disorder have primarily included the cumulative impacts of pesticides and pathogens. However, these preliminary investigations have only increased the number of possible causes by exposing an even broader array of potential culprits.

Thus, the increasing complexity and air of mystery surrounding the phenomenon of Colony Collapse Disorder led me to introduce legislation that would expedite research support for this growing problem. The Pollinator Protection Act reflects a feasible, streamlined legislative vehicle that would be able to deliver the needed infrastructural research support for Colony Collapse Disorder. The act authorizes \$20.25 million over five years in USDA Agricultural Research Service funding for facilities improvement, new personnel, and other resources to research bee physiology, insect pathology, and honeybee toxicology to better understand Colony Collapse Disorder. These funds will also support the efforts of the Colony Collapse Disorder Working Group, which is the premier cooperative research partnership investigating this issue. The Pollinator Protection Act also authorizes \$50 million over five years for competitive research grants to empower the many partners that are currently working to investigate honey bee immunology, genomics, bioinformatics, the impact of pesticides on honey bees and other pollinators, and other vital research.

With the introduction of this specific legislation, I wanted to emphasize the importance of proceeding to address this and other environmental concerns with accurate research. It is my hope that the research generated by this legislation will also inform the growing wealth of research on the impact of human activities on ecological processes vital to maintaining healthy managed and unmanaged pollinator populations.

As agenda prominence for Colony Collapse Disorder increased, I began working with Senators Barbara Boxer, Bill Nelson, and Bob Casey, among other colleagues from the Senate, to explore other policy responses. Senator Boxer took the lead in the Senate by formulating companion legislation to the Pollinator Protection Act, with some welcome adjustments to expand the scope of the legislation. As a result, the Pollinator Protection Act now reflects the nuanced expertise of my Senate colleagues and their constituents impacted by Colony Collapse Disorder and other pollinator decline. I look forward to harmonizing the Pollinator Protection Act of this body and that of the Senate to expeditiously deliver crucial

research funding to the frontline of individuals working fervently to save American wildlife and agriculture.

Another Senate initiative that I would like to commend is that of Senator Max Baucus of Montana to include pollinators in the Conservation Security Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Senator Baucus' legislation is an important step in recognizing the paramount role that pollinators play in maintaining the balance of our nation's ecosystems. I look forward to supporting his legislation or any companion measure that is brought forth in the House.

I continue to be inspired by the number of approaches put forth in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress to maintain the stability of our nation's ecosystems and agriculture. The ecosystems of the world are interconnected. Colony Collapse Disorder and pollinator decline currently threaten the ecological processes upon which humans and wildlife alike rely. If we want our grandchildren to have food to eat that was grown in this nation and enjoy ecosystems still habitable for wildlife, then something needs to be done about Colony Collapse Disorder. Otherwise, most citizens won't be able to afford the scarce agricultural products that will be produced in our nation without pollination, nor learn from thriving wildlife habitat.

I look forward to continued collaboration to achieve our common goal of reversing North American pollinator decline and stemming the scourge of Colony Collapse Disorder.

I thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you and look forward to your questions.