April 1, 2019

TO: Chairman Drew Springer, Jr. and Members of the Committee

RE: House Bill 2484 - Comments to the Agriculture and Livestock Committee

The Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB 2484, to establish a Bee Pollinator Goals Task Force to develop and report on statewide pollinator goals.

The bill recognizes that an interagency approach is needed to address the threats and decline of not only the European honeybee, but also the hundreds of species of native Texas bees. Fourteen of the native Texas bees are listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. While HB 2484 does focus on bee pollinators, it also calls upon the proposed task force to raise the public’s awareness of pollinator issues and effectiveness of state agency pollinator programs. This would recognize that bees, both non-native and native, are not the only pollinators.

Much attention has been given to the effect of pesticide use upon bee population numbers and health, but the use of such pesticides is not confined to large-scale agricultural use. They are also used in the home market and veterinary applications, for example. Therefore, the multi-agency approach is useful, although we would recommend that the Texas Department of Transportation be considered as an addition to the list of cooperative state agencies. Research is especially needed into the sub-lethal effects of pesticides.

We know that the decline in non-native and native bee populations cannot be attributed solely to pesticide use, although it is significant. Habitat loss is strongly related and disease requires more research. HB 2484 recognizes this.

The broad approach and call for a coordinated response by state agencies, as embodied by HB 2484 is what is needed.

We urge the committee to favorably report HB 2484.

Prepared by Evelyn L. Merz, Chapter Conservation Chair

For questions or additional information, please contact:
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