ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION
No. 223

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

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Sponsored by:
Assemblyman NICHOLAS CHIARAVALLOTI
District 31 (Hudson)

Co-Sponsored by:
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SYNOPSIS

Designates third Saturday in August of each year as “Save the Bees Day” in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/1/2021)

A JOINT RESOLUTION designating the third Saturday in August of each year as "Save the Bees Day" in New Jersey.

WHEREAS, There are over 20,000 species of bees worldwide and most depend on nectar and pollen as their primary food source, including the most common species of bees such as honey bees, mason leafcutter bees, carpenter bees, sweat bees, mining bees, and bumblebees; and

WHEREAS, As a bee feeds on nectar and pollen, the bee moves from flower to flower and pollinates over one-third of the world's crops in the process, making bees a vital part of global food production; and

WHEREAS, Honey bees produce honey from nectar, which has been consumed by humans as an energy source for thousands of years, are essential in the pollination of alfalfa, a plant utilized as livestock fodder since ancient times, and are often introduced in cotton fields to increase cotton production, an essential product in clothing production; and

WHEREAS, The global bee population has dropped significantly in recent years and many bee species are in danger of extinction due to the use of herbicides, which kill many of the flowering plants bees feed on, and the increased use of agricultural monocultures, which are large areas of farmland planted with a single crop that does not produce pollen or nectar, such as corn and soybeans; and

WHEREAS, The number of managed bee hives have decreased from 4.5 million to 2 million in the last 80 years due to "colony collapse disorder" caused by the use of pesticides such as neonicotinoids, which kill bees if consumed in a large enough dose or cause intoxication and disorientation in smaller doses, hindering a bee's return to its colony; and

WHEREAS, Fewer bees lead to fewer flowering plants like alfalfa that feed livestock, which may lead to a shortage of animal products humans depend on, such as meat and dairy; and

WHEREAS, 70 of the top 100 most important crops in the world that feed approximately 90 percent of the global population are pollinated by bees, thus the depletion of bee colonies may lead to rising food prices and shortages, increasing the risk of starvation, mass migration, and armed conflict; and

WHEREAS, The State of New Jersey can recognize the significance of bees, bring attention to the preventable issues devastating bee colonies, and encourage agriculturalists to limit the use of pesticides and plant biodiverse crops which provide nutrients to bees, by designating the third Saturday in August as "Save the Bees Day" in New Jersey; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The third Saturday in August of each year is designated as "Save the Bees Day" in the State of New Jersey to recognize the significance of bees and bring attention to the preventable issues devastating bee colonies.

2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a proclamation recognizing the third Saturday in August as "Save the Bees Day" in New Jersey, and call upon public officials and citizens of this State to observe the day with appropriate activities and programs.

3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

Most bees depend on the pollen and nectar produced by flowering plants as their main food source. In the process of collecting pollen and nectar, over 20,000 species of bees help pollinate plants, which in turn become essential crops for humans. Over one-third of crops, of which 70 are in the top 100 most important crops harvested by humans, require bee pollination. Additionally, humans have harvested honey produced by honey bees as a source of energy and antioxidants since ancient times. Honey bees also play essential roles in the pollination of cotton, long used by humans to produce clothing, and alfalfa, a plant often used as livestock fodder.

Due to the increasing use of herbicides, pesticides, and agricultural monocultures, the number of bees and managed bee colonies have reduced dramatically. Since World War II, managed bee colonies have reduced from 4.5 million to 2 million, a phenomenon called "colony collapse disorder". Herbicides exterminate many of the flowering plants bees utilize as food and agricultural monocultures reduce the amount of flowering plants available to bees. The most common agricultural monocultures are of non-flowering plants and grains, like corn and soybeans, which cannot be consumed by bees. Pesticides like neonicotinoids used on crops kill bees if used in high dosages. In low dosages, they confuse and disorientate bees, which prevents them from returning to their colony. If bee numbers were to continue to decline at this rate, the crops that feed 90 percent of humans will dwindle, causing inflated food prices and food shortages worldwide. Shortages of plants like alfalfa will result in the inability to sustain the number of livestock necessary to satisfy the demand for dairy and meat for human consumption. These food shortages may lead to starvation, mass migration, and armed conflict. Bees are essential for humanity to continue to thrive and should be protected from decline or extinction.