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From: Nihbs Secretary <nihbs.secretary@gmail.com>

To: edwin.poots@mla.niassembly.gov.uk

CC: Aoife NicGiolla Coda <galteebees@gmail.com>; John Hill <john.hill3@zen.co.uk>; Lyndon Wortley <leawortley@aol.com>; Derek Hanley <derek@irishbeekeepersassociation.com>

Sent: Mon, 22 Mar 2021 15:20

Subject: Statement on Bee Imports - The Native Irish Honey Bee Society

Dear Minister Poots,

Please see attached Statement from The Native Irish Honey Bee Society about the risks/dangers of importing honey bees into the island of Ireland. This statement is supported by The Ulster Beekeepers Association, by The Institute of Northern Ireland Beekeepers and by The Irish Beekeepers Association Clg.

We are fortunate to still have pure populations of native honey bees (*Apis mellifera mellifera*, also known as the black bee or dark Northern European honey bee) here in Ireland, although they are threatened due to hybridisation and health risks from imported bees. In fact last year importations to ROI increased by 327% from 2019.

It now seems that Northern Ireland may be used as a back door to continue importing bees from the EU into Great Britain. This would cause major increases in imports and would put bees in even more serious danger. We would like to ask the UK government to uphold the anti-avoidance legislation and prevent this trade and indeed we believe that Imported bees should not be considered 'Qualifying Northern Ireland Goods'.

As detailed in the Statement, we need both of our governments to help, while there is still time. As Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, please let us know what you will do to protect our local native bee, bearing in mind that:-

- * One third of Ireland's bees are already threatened with extinction.
- * We can thank pollinators (including bees) for one third of every mouthful of food we eat.
- * 90% of honey bees in Ireland are native bees - if we allow imports to continue we could lose ALL of our bees.

We are available at any time to meet with you and discuss this issue.

Regards, Loretta

Loretta Neary
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The Native Irish Honey Bee Society
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