



September 21, 2023

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Dear Secretary Haaland and Director Stone-Manning,

We are writing to you today to request a meeting regarding a rulemaking petition submitted to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management three years ago. The petition, which is attached to this email, requests that the BLM cease using categorical exclusions to permit commercial honeybee apiaries on BLM lands, and instead issue a policy directive stating that requests for the placement of these apiaries be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement, or at a minimum, a comprehensive Environmental Assessment.

The BLM routinely receives requests from commercial beekeepers to place apiaries on BLM lands. While at one time, such placements may have been considered benign, we now know that the placement of large numbers of honeybees imposes a major threat on native bees. Native bees across the U.S. are experiencing significant declines, with about 25% of all native bee species known to be facing some degree of extinction risk. Honeybees are a non-native species that can transmit disease to native bees and also outcompete them for floral resources. The BLM has permitted hundreds of millions of honeybees to utilize its lands without completing any meaningful analysis on their impacts to native bees despite the fact that BLM lands provide vital refuge for thousands of species of native bees. This petition asks that the practice of granting categorical exclusions to apiaries end, and that the BLM complete meaningful analysis on the potentially significant impacts of placing honeybee apiaries on its lands.

We recognize that the petition was submitted under a previous administration and may have fallen off the radar of BLM officials in the three years that it was submitted. However, in the years that the petition has languished, native pollinators have continued to decline. Today, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has before it petitions to list six bee species and the American public is eagerly awaiting its decision on listing the monarch butterfly, due in 2024. The BLM has in its power the ability to improve conditions for native pollinators, and this petition offers a meaningful opportunity to do so.

For this reason, **we request a meeting** to discuss this petition, answer any questions you might have regarding the petition, provide updates on the strengthening science around apiary harms, and discuss a timeline for the BLM to respond to the petition.

We look forward to hearing back from you regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

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