



March 9, 2016

Honourable Steve Crocker
Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources for Newfoundland and Labrador
Petten Building
30 Strawberry Marsh Road
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Via email: stevecrocker@gov.nl.ca

Dear Minister Crocker,

The following is a follow-up to a letter from the Newfoundland and Labrador Beekeepers' Association (NLBKA) to the former Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Perry Trimper, of January 28, 2017, regarding the issue of *Bombus impatiens* importation for the purpose of cranberry pollination.

The Ontario Beekeepers' Association supports the position of the NLBKA to restrict the importation of bumblebees for cranberry pollination into Newfoundland and Labrador. Further, we encourage beekeepers, cranberry producers and the NL Horticultural Council to engage in dialogue that would seek effective, sustainable alternatives for cranberry and commercial pollination without relying on the introduction of imported, non-native species.

Without independent, science-based evidence to the contrary, importation of *Bombus impatiens* (or other non-native species) for the purposes of pollination could result in serious, unanticipated and irreversible consequences to the native bees, domestic honey bees and other pollinators in Newfoundland and Labrador. We support a cautionary and sustainable approach, particularly as Newfoundland and Labrador enjoys a unique position in that your honey bee stocks are relatively free of many of the pathogens, diseases and pests found elsewhere in the world.

OBA's position in support of Newfoundland and Labrador beekeepers is consistent with our historical support of the Government of Canada's commitment to the well-being of Canada's managed and wild bees by not allowing the importation of US package (honey) bees into Canada. This position is reflected nationally, by the Canadian Honey Council, of which the OBA is a member.

In 2013 the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) released its consultation report, "Risk Assessment on the Importation of Honey Bee (*apis mellifera*) Packages from the United States of America, which concludes: *Conclusions of the current risk assessment are similar to the previous scientific evaluation conducted in 2003; there is still a high probability of introducing diseases and pests into Canada due to*

importation of honey bees from the continental United States. The risk assessment does not provide new scientific evidence to remove or decrease the current import control measures in place, thus allowing only the importation of honey bee queens from the United States."

While the OBA's, the Canadian Honey Council's and the Government of Canada's position noted above relate to the importation of honey bees from the U.S., we are mindful that many of the same concerns related to pests and diseases could be attributed to importation of bumblebees.

The OBA has represented Ontario's beekeepers since 1881. We work to ensure a thriving and sustainable beekeeping industry in Ontario.

Regards,



Jim Coneybeare, President

cc: Catherine Dempsey, President, Newfoundland and Labrador Beekeepers' Association