

# Oregon Governor's Task Force on Pollinator Health

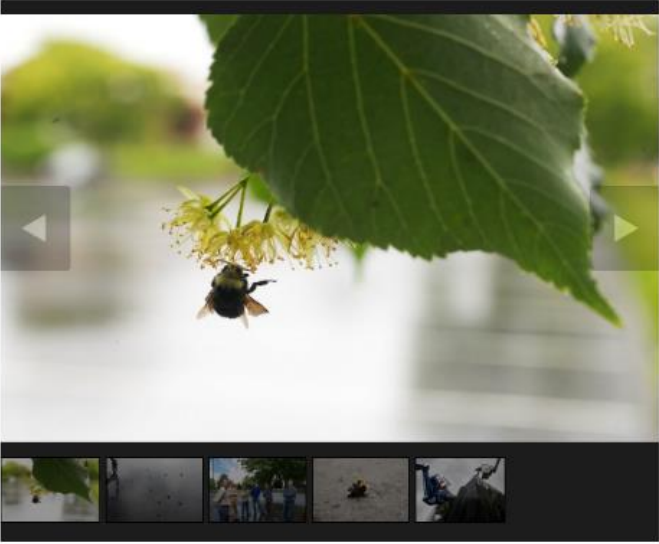
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GEORGE HANSEN

FOOTHILLS HONEY CO LLC

PAST PRESIDENT: AMERICAN BEEKEEPING FEDERATION

# 25,000 bumblebees killed, dropping from trees in Wilsonville; pesticide suspected



WILSONVILLE, OREGON -- June 18, 2013 -- A dead bumblebee clings to a linden tree in a Wilsonville parking lot. The Oregon Department of Agriculture suspects they were killed by improper application of pesticide. Motoya Nakamura/The Oregonian

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By Elizabeth Case, The Oregonian  
Follow on Twitter  
on June 19, 2013 at 4:24 PM, updated June 22, 2013 at 9:08 AM [Print](#)



An estimated 25,000 bumblebees have been found dead in a Target parking lot in Wilsonville since Saturday, the largest known incident of bumblebee deaths in the United States, according to the [Xerces Society](#). Preliminary

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A bumble bee pollinates a flower. The Pacific Northwest is home to 16 species of native bumble bees that play an important role in pollinating native plants, gardens and crops. *(Lynn Ketchum)*

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By Harry Esteve | [hesteve@oregonian.com](mailto:hesteve@oregonian.com)  
on May 27, 2014 at 2:15 PM, updated May 27, 2014 at 2:16 PM

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Bees have been dying in large numbers in Oregon, and Gov. John Kitzhaber hopes to find out why.

[The governor](#) Tuesday announced his appointments to a task force on "pollinator health," and said he wants to get to the bottom of a problem that has potentially big effects for farmers, nurseries and the environment.

"So much of Oregon's natural landscapes and agricultural lands rely on bees and other pollinators," Kitzhaber said in a news release. "The large-scale die-offs are troubling and we need to ensure we're encouraging best practices across the state."

The task force was established by the 2014 Legislature in response to [mass die-offs in 2013](#), which were traced to misuse of pesticides. It's job is to study issues related to bee health, including pesticide management and public education, according to the release.

The group is supposed to start meeting in June and submit a report to the 2015 Legislature by Oct. 1.

Task force members appointed by the governor are:

[Sen. Chuck Thomsen](#), R-Hood River.

[Rep. Jeff Reardon](#), D-Portland.

Ramesh Sagili, Oregon State University.

Jeff Stone, Oregon Association of Nurseries.

Scott Dahlman, Oregonians for Food and Shelter.

Aimee Code, Xerces Society.

Christy Splitt, Oregon Environmental Council.

Betsy Earls, Associated Oregon Industries.

George Hansen, Foothills Honey Co.



# Structure of the Task Force

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Diverse Stakeholders. Legislators were ex officio.

Universal desire to solve problems.

Wide ranging discussion, lots of ideas put on the table without prejudice. Gathered lots of resource material and model programs.

All proposals were voted on, and a record of all votes was kept.

Task Force revisited all proposals that had majority but not consensus support to explore the reasons for opposition.

Recommendations were only made where there was consensus.

# The Stakeholders

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All the members of the Task Force were residents of Oregon.

All the members represented industry or interest groups with associations to national organizations.

All of the members were paid representatives for their organizations, with the exception of the beekeeper and the Master Gardeners representatives, who were not compensated.

Commercial applicators were not directly represented. Why?

# Sidelights

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The Task Force did not recommend any restrictions on any pesticide.

However, the Oregon Department of Ag did prohibit the application in any form, by any method at any time of the year of dinotefuran on Linden trees in Oregon. This was based on their own investigation. The registrant has cooperated with the finding.

# Sidelights

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The Task Force did not recommend any restrictions on the pest control practices for growers of plants labeled as “pollinator friendly” at the point of sale.

Even as this issue was being discussed by the Task Force as a part of Minnesota’s adopted regulations, many large and small nursery outlets in Oregon and elsewhere self restricted what they allowed to be called “pollinator friendly.”



REPORT TO THE OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

# Task Force on Pollinator Health

November 2014

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/201311/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/41335>