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Governor Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301-4047

July 2, 2015

Dear Governor Brown,

Oregonians care about the survival of bees. By now, most Oregonians have heard about a number of recent bee kills in Oregon. While extremely unfortunate, these incidents have served to raise public awareness that honeybees and native bees are in jeopardy from assorted stresses including habitat loss, disease and pesticides.

Bees are necessary to a viable agricultural economy. More than 70% of America's food sources depend on bees and their amazing pollination capabilities. Bee pollination provides a national economic value of \$20 billion a year. In Oregon alone, bees provide pollination for over \$600 million in crops grown by Oregon farmers each year.

Across our state, local governments, organizations, farmers, schools and individuals are taking steps to protect honey bees. However, the public is less aware of the critical role of Oregon's native bees in pollination, including the large fuzzy bumblebee, the architectural mason bee and the iridescent sweat bee. Native bees are particularly important to the pollination of Oregon premier crops such as blueberries, marionberries, grapes, apples, cranberries and cherries. Oregon farmers need these bees for a successful crop.

Whereas a honey bee lives cooperatively in hives with many worker bees supporting a (replaceable) queen, most native bees are solitary mothers. If the mother native bee does not return to her nest, all her offspring and their future generations perish. This means that the survival of each native bee is important to the diversity and viability of Oregon's native bees.

For these reasons, we request that there be a Governor's proclamation to raise awareness on behalf of Oregon's native bees. It is likely that protecting native bees and conserving their habitat will be an ongoing priority. Thus we ask that August 15 be declared an *annual* day to celebrate Oregon Native Bee Conservation Awareness Day. We chose August 15 because it would precede annual National Honey Bee Day (August 22) by one week, serving as a kick-off to many local, statewide and national activities to promote bees.

Thank you very much for considering establishing our nation's first Native Bee Conservation Awareness Day. Your positive action will inspire other states to follow suit to conserve these fragile creatures. The health, diversity and sustainability of the Earth's ecosystems depend on wild and native bees!

If you are willing to grant our request, please send the Governor's Proclamation by August 8 to:
Beyond Toxics
PO BOX 1106
Eugene, OR 97440
Contact phone number- 541-465-8860; Contact email is info@beyondtoxics.org

Sincerely,

Lisa Arkin, on behalf of the many thousands of Oregonians who care about bees