State Pollinator Petition

In 1622 a honey bee was reintroduced to North America with the shipment of beehives to the Jamestown Settlement. Since that time the honey bee has traversed the state and continent to provide pollination for agricultural crops as well as native plants in forests, meadows, and wetlands. Exemplifying the definition of a beneficial insect, the honey bee nests in existing cavities and feeds only on the nectar and pollen provided by flowering plants remaining harmless to the plants it visits. As a generalist pollinator active throughout the year the honey bee impacts the reproduction of more plants than any other pollinator. Through the efforts of this tiny insect the production quantity and quality of more than 80 crops in the Commonwealth of Virginia is increased by a value in excess of $135 million. Increased plant reproduction and diversity through honey bee pollination of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers provides harborage and food for wildlife and contributes to the natural beauty and appeal of the Commonwealth. In addition, the honey bee provides a variety of consumer products including a valuable sweetener used for cooking, spirits, and medicinal purposes as well as wax for candle illumination, cosmetics, food preservation, and waterproofing purposes.

We, the undersigned, appeal to the General Assembly to include the Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*) among the official emblems and designations of the Commonwealth (Code of Virginia § 1-510) in recognition of the contributions by this insect as the state pollinator.

Name (print)	**Address**	**Signature**