Dear Public Representative,

I support the **Protection of the Native Irish Honey Bee Bill 2021**, introduced to the Seanad by Senator Vincent P Martin, supported by all political parties and endorsed by The Native Irish Honey Bee Society (NIHBS).

This Bill, and the rationale behind it, is backed by science and scientists, national and international. A ban on the importation of non-native honey bees is demanded by the majority of Irish beekeepers and their representative bodies, i.e. FIBKA, IBA, UBKA and INIB. I ask for your support too.

Here are some important points to help understand the dire situation of Ireland’s unique national biological treasure, the native Irish honey bee, aka *Apis mellifera mellifera (Amm)*:

* Our own Irish honey bee is a strain of the dark European honey bee, native to Europe north of the Alps. Sadly, it is now at risk of extinction across much of its original range
* Ireland is the last stronghold of this precious subspecies - for millennia *Amm* has adapted to the specific geographic and climatic conditions here
* **New research confirms Ireland has ‘a distinct and genetically diverse honey bee ecotype’**(1)
* However, the same research confirms it is **under increasing threat** from introgression
* Native honey bees are being hybridised by imported non-natives, diluting their genetic integrity and ultimately risking extinction
* Importing non-native subspecies poses other threats from pests, pathogens and diseases; if the Small Hive Beetle or Tropilaelaps are brought into Ireland, it could be as devastating as the *Varroa destructor* mite, or as foot and mouth is to cattle
* With the backing of Ireland’s major beekeeping associations as well as many existing commercial *Amm* beekeepers, who have invested in native honey bees and turned consistent profits using them, we are confident there is no need to import honey bees

This Bill will protect our *Amm*, ensuring their health, conservation and genetic purity.

As an Irish citizen concerned about the environment, biodiversity, food security, and the threatened status of our native Irish honey bee, I stand against the importation of non-native subspecies into Ireland and for the **Protection of the Native Irish Honey Bee Bill 2021**.

Please support the bill, save what we still have and protect this unique ecotype before it is too late.

Sincerely,

1. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00218839.2024.2404297>