

From: [Bill Meincke](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Cc: [Melanie Schlotterbeck](#)
Subject: City of Costa Mesa 111824 Beekeeping Ordinance Agenda Item 1
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 10:29:37 AM
Attachments: [111824 CCA Letter to CM on Beekeeping Ordinance \(SUPPORT, if Amended\) FINAL.pdf](#)

Dear City Clerk,

Please find attached a letter from the Coastal Corridor Alliance (CCA) regarding the City of Costa Mesa's proposed Beekeeping Ordinance, which is scheduled for discussion as Agenda Item 1 (Old Business) at the November 19th City Council meeting. This letter outlines our position (support, if amended) and proposed amendments to the ordinance for consideration by the Mayor and City Council.

We kindly request that this letter be distributed to the City Council for their review. Additionally, please confirm receipt of this email and attachment at your earliest convenience.

Best Regards,
Bill

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Bill Meincke
Communications Specialist
Cell: [\(949\) 216-0880](tel:9492160880)
Available: Mon – Fri



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November 18, 2024

Submitted via email to the City Clerk: cityclerk@costamesaca.gov

Mayor John Stephens and City Council
City of Costa Mesa
77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

SUBJECT: Old Business (Agenda Item 1) - Beekeeping Ordinance (Support if Amended)

Dear Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers:

Coastal Corridor Alliance (CCA) learned about the City of Costa Mesa's plan to allow residential beekeeping through the [November 12th Voice of OC article](#). Our comments are intended to improve the proposed Beekeeping Ordinance scheduled for introduction and first reading at your November 19th meeting.

BACKGROUND

By way of background, the Banning Ranch Conservancy (BRC) became the Coastal Corridor Alliance (CCA) in January 2024. The change in name and mission reflects our organization's transformation into a stewardship role and signals an expansion of our vision beyond the Randall Preserve (formerly Banning Ranch) to encompass the Coastal Corridor from the Pacific Ocean up the Santa Ana River to Adams Street in Costa Mesa. Our updated mission is to protect biodiversity, foster community stewardship, and advocate for appropriate human access on the Randall Preserve and Santa Ana River Coastal Corridor.

BEEKEEPING BACKGROUND

CCA supports residents advancing home-grown food and product resources, increasing local resiliency, reducing the large carbon and packaging impacts of remote resource acquisition, encouraging healthier people through healthier food and soil, encouraging people to engage more outdoors, and many other benefits. Local beekeeping helps with all of the above benefits.

There are ecological concerns however, which we'd like to see addressed as the City considers the ordinance. These three proposed amendments to the ordinance, include: acknowledging potential impacts to native bee populations in the first whereas, slightly revising the intent to support native bee populations too, and creating a buffer around natural parks to support native bee populations.

It is important to acknowledge that honeybees are not native species and have an outsized impact on local native pollinators and plant species, along with more indirect impacts. Honeybees are a domesticated species of bee/pollinator that have co-evolved with human agriculture.

Neither human crops nor honeybees technically need the other, but both are bolstered by the other. Many other pollinator species can sufficiently pollinate human crops, but they are likely less efficient and effective than honeybees. Honeybees live in large hives and have a large foraging range.

Honeybees often hive in 'the wild,' not in managed hives, which means they forage and pollinate in our open spaces. Honeybees are aggressively invasive. They pollinate fast-growing invasive plants like mustard, increasing its impact on native plant opportunities. Honeybees will also forage in native plants but are also territorial, pushing our local rare, threatened, and endangered pollinators away. This reduces the survivability of native pollinators.

Currently, four species of native bumble bees (the western, Franklin's, Suckley cuckoo, and Crotch's) have faced significant population declines due to several reasons (non-native honeybees, pesticides, etc.) The California Fish and Game Commission is presently considering listing each of these four bumblebee species on the California Endangered Species Act. In fact, all four are candidate species, as of June 2019.¹ The loss of our native bumblebees vastly reduces biodiversity, making our local ecology less resilient. With the recent discovery of the rare Crotch's bumblebee nesting in Fairview Park, this issue becomes even more urgent.

While honeybees have become crucially important to the modern industrialized human agricultural system, they are, in fact, invasive species to the natural ecosystems of Earth. They must be kept within the limits of human farming and treated like the domestic livestock that they are, in order to protect wild ecology and habitats, which underpin all global biological and weather systems.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

With this in mind, we propose the following amendments to the ordinance (~~striketrough~~ = delete, *italics* = additions):

¹ See California Fish and Game Commission [Notice of Findings](#) from June 18, 2019. (Also attached)

First Whereas

As noted above non-native bees impact the candidate species of bees above. We propose the following amendment to the first whereas:

WHEREAS, the keeping of domesticated bees allows for preservation of domesticated bees, which are essential to agriculture, ~~preservation of habitat~~, cultivation *and pollination* of native plants and amelioration of climate change; and

3-18.2 Intent

Recognition that residential beekeeping may have a negative impact on candidate species under consideration for listing on the California Endangered Species list should be included.

The intent and purpose of this section is to authorize residential beekeeping subject to certain requirements intended to avoid problems that may otherwise be associated with the keeping of bees in populated areas *while also making decisions that support the preservation of native bee populations.*

(c) Property and Hive Requirements

To limit disruption of the local ecology, protect biodiversity, and local parks and preserves,² we urge the addition of the following language as a new (6). Honeybees often forage 1-2 miles from their hive, but will stay closer to home when more food is available. When food is scarce, they can forage up to six miles away. Because of this we suggest the following language:

(6) Prohibit bee hives and permits from being issued within a one-mile buffer of natural parks (i.e., Fairview Park and Canyon Park) and preserves (i.e., Randall Preserve and Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve) to reduce impacts to native flora, limit the spread of non-native mustard, and protect sensitive pollinator species.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

We also urge the proposed background materials to include:

- **Send educational resources to all inquiries** on the differences and interactions between honeybees & native pollinators. Focus on the importance of the recovery of local native pollinators.
- **Suggest alternative native pollinators for residents** to manage for crop pollination instead of honeybees—for example, monarch butterfly gardens using native milkweed.

² While several preserves may be outside the City of Costa Mesa's boundaries, geopolitical boundaries are arbitrary and therefore not followed by flora and fauna. The proximity of Costa Mesa residences to the Randall Preserve and Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve, for example, have the potential to impact native bumblebee populations on both preserves.

- **Aim to keep all domesticated bees in managed hives** and to remove honeybee hives occurring in the wild, especially in natural habitats (Fairview Park, Canyon Park, etc.), because they are invasive.
- **Spearhead regional reform by establishing Costa Mesa as a pollinator city.** The Mayor has suggested Costa Mesa could become known as a butterfly city. Costa Mesa could lead the way by advocating with other Orange County cities to put native pollinator protections like these in place, to update their beekeeping policies, and perhaps even sponsor honeybee selection programs to direct honeybee evolution to be less aggressive with smaller foraging radii.

If these suggested ordinance amendments are incorporated, CCA would support the ordinance. Please let us know how we can help Costa Mesa become a pollinator city. Should you have questions, we can be reached at (949) 216-0880.

Sincerely,



Terry M. Welsh, MD
President

Attachment: 1 Notice of Findings for Bumblebees by CFGC (06/18/19)

Helpful Resources:

- [Landscape factors influencing honey bee colony behavior in Southern California commercial apiaries](#) (03/19/20)
- [Pollinator Conservation Resources: California](#) (last accessed 11/16/24)
- [Native BeeSip](#) (last accessed 11/16/24)
- [Bee City USA & Bee Campus USA](#) (last accessed 11/16/24)
- [Honeybee Forage Map](#) (last accessed 11/16/24)
- [Bumblebee Watch](#) (last accessed 11/16/24)

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Fish and Game Commission



Wildlife Heritage and Conservation
 Since 1870

CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION NOTICE OF FINDINGS

Crotch Bumble Bee (*Bombus crotchii*), Franklin's Bumble Bee (*Bombus franklini*),
 Suckley Cuckoo Bumble Bee (*Bombus suckleyi*), and
 Western Bumble Bee (*Bombus occidentalis occidentalis*)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to the provisions of Section 2074.2 of the Fish and Game Code, the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission), at its June 12, 2019 meeting in Redding, California, accepted for consideration the petition submitted to list Crotch bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), Franklin's bumble bee (*Bombus franklini*), Suckley cuckoo bumble bee (*Bombus suckleyi*), and western bumble bee (*Bombus occidentalis occidentalis*) as endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

Pursuant to subdivision (e)(2) of Section 2074.2 of the Fish and Game Code, the Commission determined that the amount of information contained in the petition, when considered in light of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (DFW) written evaluation report, the comments received, and the remainder of the administrative record, would lead a reasonable person to conclude there is a substantial possibility the requested listing(s) could occur.

Based on that finding and the acceptance of the petition, the Commission is also providing notice that Crotch bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), Franklin's bumble bee (*Bombus franklini*), Suckley cuckoo bumble bee (*Bombus suckleyi*), and western bumble bee (*Bombus occidentalis occidentalis*) are candidate species as defined by Section 2068 of the Fish and Game Code.

Within one year of the date of publication of this notice of findings, the Department shall submit a written report, pursuant to Section 2074.6 of the Fish and Game Code, indicating whether the petitioned action is warranted. Copies of the petition, as well as minutes of the June 12, 2019 Commission meeting, are on file and available for public review from Melissa Miller-Henson, Acting Executive Director, Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320, Sacramento, California 95814, phone (916) 653-4899. Written comments or data related to the petitioned action should be directed to the Commission at P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090 or email FGC@fgc.ca.gov.

Fish and Game Commission

June 18, 2019

Melissa Miller-Henson
 Acting Executive Director

From: [Peter Scharnell](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Old Business (Agenda Item 1) - Beekeeping Ordinance (Support if Amended)
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 5:08:38 PM

Dear Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers:

I strongly support the letter submitted by the Coastal Corridor Alliance on Monday November 18, 2024, to put protections in place for native bees in the planned beekeeping ordinance.

Thanks for partnering with us in our local conservation efforts.

Regards,

Peter Scharnell

Secretary

Cell: [\(770\) 715-0619](tel:(770)715-0619)



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November 19, 2024

Submitted via email to the City Clerk: cityclerk@costamesaca.gov

Mayor John Stephens and City Council
City of Costa Mesa
77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

SUBJECT: Old Business (Agenda Item1) – Beekeeping Ordinance

Dear Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

For the record, Fairview Park Alliance agrees with Coastal Corridor Alliance's letter regarding the Beekeeping Ordinance before you tonight. (See Attached)

Sincerely,

Kim Hendricks
President

Attachment: Coastal Corridor Alliance letter to Costa Mesa City Council



Sincerely,

Name
Title
Fairview Park Alliance

From: [Priscilla Rocco](#)
To: [CITY CLERK](#)
Subject: Including CCA's recommendations in the beekeeping ordinance
Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 11:48:13 AM
Attachments: [111824 CCA Letter to CM on Beekeeping Ordinance \(SUPPORT, if Amended\) FINAL.pdf](#)

City Council,

I am in complete agreement with CCA (Coastal Corridor Alliance) that Costa Mesa's Beekeeping Ordinance should not damage our native bee population. Restrictions to create a buffer zone to keep managed honey bees away from Fairview Park, Canyon Park, and Talbert Park is good biodiversity policy. It is in keeping with the federal and state 30 x 30 biodiversity plans that are mandated to save 30% of land and water by 2030.

However, allowing managed honey bees in Costa Mesa is necessary, because so many of us have gardens packed with fruit trees, fruits, vegetables, and flowers, both native and cultivars. So, no matter what we do, we will have bees taking up residence.

As many of you know - despite my clever deceptions - honey bees have lived in my atrium in a trash can for 10 years. I leave them alone and they have never had a reason to swarm. Along with them are the Monarchs that fill my gardens in the summer, due to my extensive amount of milkweed. And the more native plants I put in, the more bumble bees and other native pollinators come to live. So far, everyone is sharing the garden without incident. But other folks may not have this situation and I would hate for honey bees - which are not native to this country - to displace the native bee populations we are so lucky to have in these three parks, and in the Randal Preserve.

I am a rank novice with limited knowledge, but the Coastal Corridor Alliance has a deep bench of scientists and experts who have taken it upon themselves to protect, restore, and preserve the area from Fairview Park to the sea. They provide exactly the kind of information and recommendations that will protect what we have, restore what we must, and regain the biodiversity that once was common in this part of California.

Thank you,
Priscilla Rocco