July 30, 2018

TO : The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councilors, CAO,Town of Mono

FROM: The Board of the Mono Mulmur Citizens’ Coalition (MC2)

SUBJECT: BEE CITY

Recently we noted that the Town of Mono had been granted recognition as a “Bee City Canada”. This was in recognition of steps taken by the Town, including the development of a pollinator garden, shunning the use of pesticides, and strengthening the natural environment. We wanted to take this opportunity to compliment the Town, its Council and Staff, for responding in this way to the serious threat that faces our bee population. And this note also recognizes the group of volunteers who have created and maintained the garden, a good example of government and citizen volunteers working together.

In many ways bees are the “canary in the coal mine” for the threat to all insect life in our communities. We have read about the significant decline in insect species in many parts of Europe and in order to prevent such a critical crisis developing here, we will need this type of recognition by our governing groups, such as the Mono Council, that serious actions are needed.

In 2016 MC2 held a workshop on the issue of the decline in bees. This well attended event called attention to the many causes of this decline, including urbanization, industrial farming, use of agricultural chemicals, particularly neonicontinoids, and others. Our key aim was to raise community awareness and to encourage citizen action. We called on all levels of government to respond to this threat, and many of our citizens joined the effort to gain action. The Town of Mono joined the response by writing to the Province requesting limits on neonicontinoids. As a result of public pressure, the Ontario Government began a process of restriction of neonicontinoids (although there is much more to be done of this front), joining many national governments in Europe and elsewhere.

The Town of Mono’s action, and the recognition the community and the volunteers have received, is an important part of the process of responding to the crisis of insect decline, and of raising citizen awareness about the issue. The garden will be a permanent reminder of a community taking action to address this problem. Thank you for doing this.

At the same time, it would be of increased impact if Mono could take further steps, focusing on the use of agricultural chemicals which not only threaten our insect species, but also could potentially put our water and air purity at risk. While many aspects of this problem may be beyond the Town’s jurisdiction, taking steps to further raise this issue with upper levels of government as well as participating in the work to increase public awareness would be very helpful.

In closing, on behalf of our members, we again say, congratulations on this recognition, and thank you for further opening the door on a major threat to our rural communities. We also would request that you forward this note to the group of volunteers who have made the garden possible. We very much appreciate their work on this fine project.

Regards,

Don MacFarlane

Interim President

Mono Mulmur Citizens’ Coalition