



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Commercial Beekeepers Launch New Program to Address Hive Theft**

Sacramento, CA -- The California State Beekeepers Association is excited to announce a new effort aimed at preventing the rapidly expanding number of hive theft incidents that continue to jeopardize California's agricultural production and increase food costs.

"California has experienced an 87% increase in hive thefts since 2013 with loss to beekeepers estimated at over \$3.5 million. Beekeepers have to take action that will result in criminal convictions in order to stop these thefts," said Ryan Burris, president of the state organization representing commercial beekeepers who are the primary suppliers of California's massive pollination needs.

Beehives are in huge demand, particularly during the height of California's almond bloom which occurs each year in February. Each year millions of beehives are brought into the state to provide pollination for farmers of almonds and other crops. With farmers paying up to \$225 per hive to rent bees that ensure their crop is adequately pollinated, beehives are a growing new target of thieves. The high value of hives during pollination season has spurred an increase in individuals, and even crime rings, who steal hives from orchards and then rent these stolen hives to farmers who need bees to pollinate their crops.

"The commercial beekeeping industry is experiencing significant hive losses nationwide for a number of reasons," says Burris. "We are anticipating there will not be sufficient hives for the 2025 almond pollination season. On top of this issue, hive theft reports are coming in daily."

Through a unique partnership with the Pipkin Detective Agency, a California-based Private Detective Agency specializing in agricultural crime, the California State Beekeepers Association (CSBA) is launching its new *Commercial Hive Theft Prevention Program* available to members of the association. As part of this arrangement, the Pipkin Detective Agency is donating 50 hours of free time to CSBA to investigate hive theft incidents with the goal of securing convictions of criminals who commit these crimes.

Burris stressed that, for now, participation in CSBA's new *Commercial Hive Theft Program* is available exclusively to beekeepers who are paid, voting members of the CSBA at the time of the theft incident. Beekeepers interested in joining CSBA can learn more and join [here](#).

"CSBA encourages beekeepers to properly mark their hives with names, distinctive brands and use tracking devices such as air tags. They should continue to report hive thefts to local law enforcement," continues Burris. "Every step you take to protect your hives will decrease the chance of theft or, at least, increase the likelihood of a criminal conviction if stolen."

“We appreciate the opportunity and look forward working hand in hand with our law enforcement partners including local, state and federal agencies to assist in the investigation and conviction of responsible parties,” says Rocky Pipkin of the Pipkin Detective Agency.

“We need everyone working together – beekeepers, farmers, law enforcement, and even the public – to help put a stop to beehive theft,” continued Burris, who noted that the CSBA website contains detailed information on recent hive theft incidents to help identify stolen hives and those involved. “CSBA intends to investigate as many hive theft incidents as we can with special focus on those the Pipkin Detective Agency believes have the best potential to result in conviction. We look forward to working with them.”

Beekeepers interested in learning more are encouraged to attend the upcoming 2025 Pollination BBQ to be held February 7 from 11 to 3:00 p.m. at Marsella Family Vineyards, 13480 Orange Blossom Rd. in Oakdale where Rocky Pipkin of Pipkin Detective Agency will share more about the *Commercial Hive Theft Program* and provide tips on how to be proactive during pollination season. Pipkin will be providing No Trespassing signs and other deterrence documentation at no charge. The event is free to all beekeepers. RSVPs are not required but appreciated.

If you are a Voting CSBA Member who experiences a hive theft and wants to participate in the CSBA Commercial Hive Theft Program, please reach out to Brooke Palmer at brooke@agamsi.com or 530-902-5515.

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#### About CSBA:

The California State Beekeepers Association is an organization that exists to support professional beekeepers and California’s pollination needs. CSBA values all kinds of bees whether they’re commercial, non-commercial or native pollinators. But our primary concern is protecting managed bees who are doing the work of feeding the world. CSBA funds research designed to improve bee health and advocates to help commercial beekeepers in the face of several critical issues. For more information on the organization and how to join, please visit <https://www.californiastatebeekeepers.com/>