

DISCUSSION DRAFT

Concept Bill Language — Not Introduced Legislation

Working title: The Honest Honey Labeling Act of 2026

Purpose: to require a small, standardized, front-of-package “point-of-origin mark” on retail honey — either a USA/flag mark for honey produced entirely in the United States, or an “IMPORTED” mark for honey that is not — so consumers can tell origin at a glance, without hunting for fine-print country-of-origin text elsewhere on the package.

This draft is written to be usable two ways. It can be introduced as a standalone bill (the text below is formatted that way), or its operative language (Sections 3–8) can be offered as a new section inserted into a pending vehicle such as the Honey Integrity Act (S. 1028 / H.R. 2162) or the HIVE Act, where it would sit alongside those bills’ standard-of-identity provisions rather than compete with them.

Before this goes anywhere near introduction:

1. A member of Congress (ideally from a top honey-producing state) has to agree to sponsor it, or agree to offer it as an amendment to an existing bill.
2. Only the House or Senate Office of Legislative Counsel can turn this into bill text that is actually introduced. Give them this document as a statement of policy intent, not as text to introduce verbatim — they will rewrite it into the chamber's required drafting style, check it against existing law, and resolve any conflicts with the AMS honey COOL regulation and the pending Honey Integrity Act/HIVE Act language.
3. Loop in the American Beekeeping Federation and American Honey Producers Association early — both already have active positions on honey standard-of-identity and country-of-origin legislation, and sponsor offices will likely ask whether industry groups are aligned before agreeing to carry this.
4. Expect committee referral to Agriculture (primary) and possibly Energy & Commerce, since the mark also touches FDA misbranding and FTC deceptive-practices authority.

Open policy calls you'll want to make before this is finalized — flagged inline in the draft with [bracketed notes]: how “United States” origin is defined for honey (bees located here vs. only extraction/packing here), whether there's a small-packer compliance option, and how long packers get to transition existing inventory.

A BILL

To require standardized front-of-package point-of-origin identification for honey sold at retail in the United States, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Honest Honey Labeling Act of 2026".

SECTION 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

- (1) The honey industry supports pollination services essential to United States agriculture and contributes significantly to rural economies in honey-producing States.
- (2) Consumers increasingly seek to purchase honey produced domestically, but country-of-origin disclosures currently found on honey packaging are frequently printed in small type, in low-contrast colors, or in inconspicuous locations, making such disclosures difficult for consumers to locate or read.
- (3) The absence of a standardized, easily identifiable origin marking undermines the ability of consumers to make informed purchasing decisions and disadvantages domestic honey producers competing against imported honey, including honey later found by Federal investigations to have been transshipped or misrepresented as to origin.
- (4) A uniform, front-of-package origin mark — comparable in visibility to other point-of-sale identifiers already familiar to consumers — would allow consumers to distinguish, at the point of sale, honey produced entirely within the United States from honey that is imported, without requiring consumers to search for or interpret text disclosures placed elsewhere on the package.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

- (1) **COVERED HONEY PRODUCT.**—The term "covered honey product" means honey packaged for sale to consumers at retail, including honey sold in bottles, jars, bear-shaped containers, packets, or other retail containers. Such term does not include an instance in which honey is one ingredient among several in a multi-ingredient packaged food product in which honey is not the sole or predominant named ingredient.
- (2) **DOMESTIC ORIGIN HONEY.**—The term "domestic origin honey" means a covered honey product for which all honey contained in the product [was produced by bees located in, and] was extracted, processed, and packaged within, the United States. [Bracketed language reflects an open policy call: whether hive location, not just packing location, should be required — this affects imported bulk honey that is merely bottled domestically.]

- (3) IMPORTED HONEY.—The term "imported honey" means a covered honey product that is not domestic origin honey, including any covered honey product that is a blend of honey of United States origin and honey of one or more other countries of origin.
- (4) POINT-OF-ORIGIN MARK.—The term "point-of-origin mark" means the mark described in section 4(b).
- (5) PRINCIPAL DISPLAY PANEL.—The term "principal display panel" has the meaning given the term in section 101.1 of title 21, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor regulation.
- (6) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture.

SECTION 4. FRONT-OF-PACKAGE POINT-OF-ORIGIN MARK REQUIRED.

- (a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the effective date described in section 8, a covered honey product may not be sold or offered for sale at retail in the United States unless the principal display panel of the retail package bears a point-of-origin mark that complies with this section.
- (b) FORM OF MARK.—
 - (1) Domestic origin honey.—The point-of-origin mark for domestic origin honey shall be a circular or shield-shaped mark not less than three-eighths of one inch (9.5 millimeters) in diameter, rendered in a color that contrasts with its background, and bearing—
 - (A) the word "USA" or "DOMESTIC"; or
 - (B) a design depicting the flag of the United States, accompanied by the word "USA".
 - (2) Imported honey.—The point-of-origin mark for imported honey shall be a circular or shield-shaped mark meeting the same minimum size and contrast requirements described in paragraph (1), bearing the word "IMPORTED", and may, at the option of the packer, additionally identify the country or countries of origin.
- (c) PLACEMENT.—The point-of-origin mark required under this section shall—
 - (1) appear on the principal display panel of the retail package, within the same field of vision as the statement of identity required under Federal law;
 - (2) be clearly and conspicuously placed so as not to be obscured, obstructed, or crowded by other text, graphics, or packaging elements; and
 - (3) not be placed on the bottom, rear, or any side panel of the package in lieu of the principal display panel.
- (d) BLENDED PRODUCT RULE.—A covered honey product containing any honey not produced within the United States shall bear the point-of-origin mark described in subsection (b)(2), regardless of the proportion of domestic honey contained in the product.

SECTION 5. IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS.

- (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the Commissioner of Food and Drugs and the Chair of the Federal Trade Commission, shall promulgate regulations to carry out this Act, including regulations specifying —
- (1) precise dimensional, color-contrast, and typographic specifications for the point-of-origin mark;
 - (2) model artwork for the point-of-origin mark, which shall be made available to packers without charge or licensing restriction;
 - (3) procedures for verifying the origin of honey for purposes of section 4; and
 - (4) a simplified compliance option under which qualifying small packers, as defined by the Secretary, may satisfy this Act through application of a self-adhesive label rather than modification of existing package printing.
- (b) **SMALL PACKER RELIEF.**—In defining “qualifying small packers” under subsection (a)(4), the Secretary shall consider the cost of packaging retooling relative to the annual revenue of a packer, with the goal of minimizing compliance costs for small and mid-sized domestic beekeeping operations. [Open policy call: where to set the small-packer revenue threshold.]

SECTION 6. ENFORCEMENT.

- (a) **TREATMENT AS MISBRANDING.**—A covered honey product that fails to comply with section 4 shall be deemed misbranded for purposes of section 403 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 343), and shall be subject to the enforcement authorities and penalties available under such Act.
- (b) **UNFAIR OR DECEPTIVE ACT.**—A violation of section 4 shall also be treated as an unfair or deceptive act or practice under section 5(a) of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 45(a)), and the Federal Trade Commission may enforce this Act as though the requirements of section 4 were a rule promulgated under section 18 of that Act.
- (c) **STATE ENFORCEMENT.**—The attorney general of a State, upon a reasonable belief that a violation of this Act has occurred or is occurring within the State, may bring a civil action in an appropriate district court of the United States to enjoin the violation.

SECTION 7. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act, or in regulations issued under this Act, shall be construed to preempt or limit a State law that imposes country-of-origin, transparency, or labeling requirements on honey equivalent to, or more protective of consumers than, the requirements of this Act. The authority provided under this Act may not be limited, altered, or otherwise affected by a ruling of the World Trade Organization or of any other international body of which the United States is a member.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The requirements of section 4 shall take effect on the date that is 18 months after the date on which the Secretary issues final regulations under section 5, to provide covered honey packers a reasonable period to deplete existing packaging inventory and incorporate the point-of-origin mark into new packaging.

SECTION 9. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Act, or the application of a provision to any person or circumstance, is held to be invalid, the remainder of this Act, and the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected.