



A Resolve to Protect Pollinator Habitat

S.497 Sponsored by Senator Jason Lewis (Winchester)
H.818 Sponsored by Representative Mary Keefe (Worcester)

It's Massachusetts' turn to be a leader in pollinator recovery!

Protecting pollinator habitat would not only help restore their populations, but also improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, and provide habitat for birds and other wildlife.

This bill would establish a commission to study statewide opportunities for improving pollinator health by increasing and enhancing native habitat. Both developed and natural areas will be considered, including farm field borders, urban areas, and transportation corridors.

The commission shall examine many issues relevant to pollinator health, including current laws and regulations, public awareness, funding, best management, practices, and the use of agricultural and non-agricultural lands.

What are pollinators and why are they important?

Pollinators include not only honeybees, but hundreds of species of wild bees, as well as butterflies, moths, beetles, wasps and birds.

One in every three bites of food we eat depends on pollinators and they contribute more than \$24 billion to the U.S. economy. Pollinators are the glue that holds our natural world together; many plant-pollinator relationships evolved over millions of years.

What is the crisis and what is causing it?

Pollinator populations have been declining for decades. In 1947 there were 6 million colonies of honeybees in the United States, while today there are only 2.5 million/ The Monarch butterfly migration is also at risk of failing. The pollinator crisis is due to a variety of stressors including disease, mite infestations, poor nutrition, lack of genetic diversity, pesticide exposure, loss of habitat, and Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD).

Solutions

At least 22 states have enacted legislation to restore pollinator populations, typically by addressing one or more of the following:

- **Research** – to better understand pollinator health, Connecticut's SB231 convened experts for a Pollinator Advisory Committee.
- **Awareness** - to educate the public on the importance of pollinators, Oregon's HB3362 established the pollinator health outreach and education plan.
- **Habitat protection** – Washington's HB2478 required agencies to give preference to replacing weeds with native forage plants.