

SB22-131: CONCERNING HEALTHY POLLINATOR HABITAT THAT PROTECTS HUMAN HEALTH

When we protect healthy and diverse habitats, we protect the health of people and pollinators.

Sponsors: Senator Jaquez Lewis & Priola and Representatives Kipp & Froelich

What are pollinators? Pollinators are animals - mostly insects, but also some birds, bats and a few others - that move pollen from the male to female parts of a flower, which is essential to the reproduction of over 85% of the world's flowering plants - the foundation of life on earth. Pollinators ensure that many of the plants we eat can produce fruit and vegetables from our Palisade peaches to our Pueblo Chiles. Native pollinators provide an estimated economic value to U.S. agriculture of \$3 billion/year. Colorado relies on pollinators, and our unique geography and climates mean we have a large diversity of pollinator species serving key roles in our ecosystems. These pollinators are at risk. Many factors contribute to our concern about pollinator health that also affect people. In fact, the potential decline of pollinators has direct consequences for human survival. Habitat loss and fragmentation; inadequate food sources, pesticide impacts, disease and parasites all weaken pollinators, but the combination is a perfect storm leading to precipitous declines of many insects with repercussions for entire ecosystems.

While pesticides play a role in agriculture and can effectively kill insects, weeds or other pests, these chemicals also harm beneficial insects like pollinators. Additionally, there is substantial evidence that pesticides pose a significant risk to people, particularly children, as well as to non-target organisms, such as pollinators, birds and other wildlife. Pesticides can pollute water, disrupt ecosystems, contribute to biodiversity loss, degrade soil health, reduce soil's capacity to store carbon, and destroy habitat. Pesticides also contribute directly to the underlying causes of some aspects of climate change.

Solution: While Colorado is home to more than 950 species of bees, 250 species of butterflies and many species of wildlife which provide critical pollinator services, Colorado does not have a comprehensive plan to ensure we protect these species. Colorado lacks resources to work across our agencies to ensure adequate planning, protection, and coordination for pollinators and there's insufficient capacity to protect human health as we consider pesticide use. SB22-131 will make strides to address pesticide risks and protection of people, pollinators and soils.

- Conduct a pollinator health study and develop recommendations on how to address the challenges associated with the threats to pollinator health.
- Create a grant program at the Colorado Department of Agriculture that would allow producers to acquire seeds voluntarily that are non-coated. Currently, most seeds used in traditional agriculture production are coated in neonicotinoids that move throughout the plant into all tissues, including nectar and pollen, and also migrate into soil and water, harming aquatic food webs.
- Allow local governments to make choices about pesticide use in their own communities. Preemption prevents local governments from using their unique knowledge and risk tolerance to respond quickly and effectively to protect their water supplies, residents and pollinators from harm.¹ Federal and state laws serve as a floor or baseline of protection. It is prudent to ensure local communities the freedom to rely on this information to adopt more stringent standards of protection as they see fit.
- Add Neonicotinoids as a restricted use pesticide (RUP). A RUP is a pesticide that is not available for use by the general public. Neonicotinoids are a group of insecticides that harm pollinators and other animals and commonly contaminate urban streams. This policy would limit some non-agricultural uses.
- Limit pesticide use on school grounds to protect pollinators that use this space and to protect our children whose health is at risk; [“Epidemiologic evidence demonstrates associations between early life exposure to pesticides and pediatric cancers, decreased cognitive function, and behavioral problems.”²](#)

¹ Centner, T. J., & Heric, D. C. (2019). Anti-community state pesticide preemption laws prevent local governments from protecting people from harm. *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*, 17(2), 118–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14735903.2019.1568814>

² <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/130/6/e1757/30399/Pesticide-Exposure-in-Children>

For more information: <https://www.peopleandpollinators.org/pollinator-human-health-bill>

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ENDORSEMENTS

American Bird Conservancy
Audubon Rockies
BeeChicas
Betty Ford Alpine Gardens
Blooming Landscape & Design, LLC
Born Custom Guitars LLC
Boulder Permaculture
Brighton Bee Club
Buddha and the Bees, LLC
Cart Driver
Circle Ecology
Citizens Alliance for a Sustainable Englewood
City of Boulder
City of Fountain
Classrooms for Climate Action
Colorado Farm and Food Alliance
Colorado Field Ornithologists
Colorado Insurors Service, Inc.
Colorado Municipal League
Colorado State Beekeepers Association
Colorado Public Interest Research Group
Colorado Wild Rabbit Foundation
Conservation Colorado
Denver Council Member Candi CdeBaca
Drylands Agroecology Research
Eagle River Water & Sanitation District
Eagle River Watershed Council
Eco-Cycle
Fairview Net Zero Environmental Club
Four Corners Beekeepers Association
Front Range Wild Ones
FrontLine Farming
The Gardening Bug
G R O W LLC
Healthy Babies Bright Futures
Honeywood Garden Design, LLC
IJDesign
Inland Ocean Coalition
Jefferson County Beekeeper Association
Larimer County Farmers Alliance
League of Women Voters
Leave it for Me! LLC
Littleton Garden Gang
The Loveland Garden Club
Magpie Acres & Studio
Manitou Pollinators
Mile High Emergent Consulting
Moon Valley Organics
Morburn Associates
Natural Grocers
Our Sacred Earth
Parents for the Planet
The Peoples Bees
People & Planet Healing Solutions
People & Pollinators Action Network
Pollinator Stewardship Council
Restorative Landscape Design
Rock 'n Roots Farm
Rocky Mountain Wild
Sierra Club
Simply Bee Organics
Stowaway Kitchen
Sunday
Tree Shots LLC
Unite North Metro Denver
University of Denver Sustainability Council
Vail Town Council
Web of Life Products
Westminster Bee Club
Wild Birds Unlimited #023
Wild Foundation
Wild Heritage Gardens
Wild Iris Living, LLC
The Wright Life
Town of Monument

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