



POLLINATOR FRIENDLY ALLIANCE
PO BOX 934, STILLWATER, MN 55082
WWW.POLLINATORFRIENDLY.ORG

To: Minnesota House of Representatives, State and Local Government Finance & Policy Chair Rep. Ginny Klevorn and Committee Members

Date: February 14, 2023

Support for Bill #HF734: *Cities Required to Allow Native Landscapes on Private Land*

Pollinator Friendly Alliance board of directors, staff and thousands of members support Bill #HF734 to allow native landscapes and to protect the rights of Minnesotans to grow native or natural habitats in their backyards, school yards and other community areas.

Communities that support landscape habitat understand the importance and value that biodiversity in trees, shrubs, grasses and flowers support:

1. Healthy backyards increase property values as people want to live where there is clean water, air and land.
2. Native plant diversity makes the landscape more resistant to climate change than landscapes with fewer plant species.
3. A substantial root system which supports healthy soil and plants has natural resistance to weather and pests resulting in less management, less pesticides and cleaner water. (Most perennial pollinator plants have roots one to over 16 feet long).
4. Native habitats provides nesting and overwintering areas, and food and water for pollinators and birds in decline.
5. Substantial root system filters contaminants and protects water quality.
6. Reduces soil erosion and rejuvenates soil health.
7. Increases visual appeal.
8. Provide carbon sequestration.

Communities that restrict yards to lawns over landscape habitat ignore a number of important crises of our time and in our state:

- Collapse of the populations of pollinators and birds,
- Climate crisis,
- Pesticide pollution of water, soil and food.

Support Summary:

We at Pollinator Friendly Alliance understand Minnesotans. **We work with communities across Minnesota who want the option to plant healthy ecosystems.** Pollinator Friendly Alliance (PFA) installed and helps manage over 200 acres of native habitat. PFA also hosts an annual land management summit with an audience of over 3,000 local, county and state agencies, private landscapers and individual landowners from around the U.S. who come to learn ecologically sound practices for land management.

Minnesotans are concerned about pollinator and bird decline. Gardeners and homeowners are uniquely positioned to make a positive impact in their landscape. **Recent research has indicated pollinators may be faring better in urban and suburban environments where they are protected from the widespread use of pesticides and monocultures found in agricultural lands.**

As Rachel Carson said, **“These insects, so essential to our agriculture and indeed to our landscape as we know it, deserve something better from us than the senseless destruction of their habitat”**. Yet pollinator species are disappearing at alarming rates around the world and in our own backyards.

- World Wildlife Fund reports wildlife and insect populations plummeted by more than two-thirds in the last 40 years. A United Nations report found that up to 40% of pollinators were at risk of extinction in the coming decades. In North America, 28% of bumble bee species are already at risk of extinction. [Monarch butterfly populations have declined](#) by more than 80% in the Eastern U.S. and more than 99% in the West.

Hefty native plant root systems filter groundwater and surface waters in a [state where 85% of surface waters tested were found contaminated with herbicides, fourteen water bodies are impaired by chlorpyrifos, and insecticides in the neonicotinoid class were deemed “surface water pesticides of concern”](#).

We are living during a historical time when climate crisis and species extinctions are upon us and we need to take immediate action. Allowing backyard biodiverse habitats for pollinator keystone species is one step in the right direction. We urge you to support and encourage plant biodiversity and native landscapes for habitat in Minnesota yards and open spaces on public and private lands.

Thank you for your work and consideration.

Related document links:

Three billion birds have been lost in North America since 1970

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/three-billion-birds-lost-north-america>

Habitat loss - drivers of soliday bee declines:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214574521000572>

Pollinator-friendly parks and yards:

<https://www.xerces.org/publications/guidelines/pollinator-friendly-parks>