



November 22, 2019

Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

The Honorable Anne Gobi, Senate Chair
The Honorable Smitty Pignatelli, House Chair
Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
State House
Boston, MA 02133

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RE: Support for S.497, A Resolve to Protect Pollinator Habitat and H.818, An Act to Protect Pollinator Habitat

Dear Chair Gobi and Chair Pignatelli:

The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) respectfully requests that the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture support A Resolve to Protect Pollinator Habitat (S.497) and An Act to Protect Pollinator Habitat (H.818) and report this legislation out with a favorable recommendation.

Margo Fenn

DeeDee Holt

Thomas Huettner

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Jack Looney

Cheryl Lubin

Founded in 1968, APCC is the Cape Cod region's leading nonprofit environmental advocacy and education organization, working for the adoption of laws, policies and programs that protect and enhance Cape Cod's natural resources and quality of life.

Elysse Magnotto-Cleary

S.497/H.818 would establish a special commission to study opportunities for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to improve the health of our pollinators by increasing and enhancing pollinator habitat, as well as other issues relevant to pollinator health.

Blue Magruder

Eliza McClennen

Stephen Mealy

Protecting our pollinators is critically important to both the ecological and economic wellbeing of our state. Pollinator species, including bees, butterflies and bats, are in trouble. Loss of habitat, disease, parasites, competition from invasive species, climate change and the impact of pesticides on insect pollinators has resulted in an alarming decline in important pollinator species.

Kris Ramsay

Robert Summersgill

Taryn Wilson

Just this year, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife proposed to add three bee species to the state's Endangered Species List—the American bumblebee (*Bombus pensylvanicus*) and Walsh's anthophora (*Anthophora walshii*) as endangered species and yellow-banded bumblebee (*Bombus terricola*) as a threatened species. The



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American bumblebee is a telling example of pollinator decline: Once prevalent throughout the state, the species population has diminished sharply over the past several decades to the point where it is now only found in areas within the Connecticut River Valley.

APCC supports the objectives of the commission, which will be tasked with undertaking a wide-ranging investigation of programs and policies from other states intended to protect and improve pollinator habitat. It will also study how agricultural lands and various types of nonagricultural lands can be better utilized for pollinator habitat, as well as ways to engage businesses and the public in educational programs to help address habitat protection. The commission's findings will be presented to the legislature along with possible proposed legislation.

The commission's study of the issues and recommended actions to protect and enhance pollinator habitat and improve pollinator health will be particularly important with regard to the impact of neonicotinoid pesticides on bees, and how the commission's findings might guide future policies on the pesticide's use in Massachusetts. While strongly supporting S.497 and H.818, APCC also believes there is already enough data on the adverse impacts of neonicotinoids to warrant a ban on these products, and that creation of the commission should not be used to unreasonably delay needed action. Exposure to neonicotinoids has been directly linked to bee deaths and weakened and reduced honeybee hives. Its use in Massachusetts and elsewhere is widespread. A recent study of honey samples collected around the world revealed the presence of neonicotinoids in three-quarters of the samples. In North America, the pesticide was present in 86 percent of the honey samples analyzed. (Mitchell, et al., 2017)

The establishment of this special commission will be an important step forward in the actions we must undertake to address the population declines of important pollinator species. APCC thanks the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture for their careful consideration of this legislation and urges the committee to act swiftly in reporting it out with a favorable recommendation.

Sincerely,



Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director



Don Keeran
Assistant Director

cc: Sen. Julian Cyr Rep. David Vieira
 Sen. Viriato deMacedo Rep. Dylan Fernandes
 Rep. Sarah Peake Rep. Randy Hunt
 Rep. Timothy Whelan Sen. Jason Lewis
 Rep. William Crocker Rep. Mary Keefe