



Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

March 30, 2021

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Washington, DC 20515

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RE: Support for ***Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act of 2021*** and ***Monarch Act of 2021***

Steven Koppel

Elysse Magnotto-Cleary

Dear Senator Warren, Senator Markey and Representative Keating:

Blue Magruder

Eliza McClennen

Stephen Mealy

Kris Ramsay

Robert Summersgill

The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) respectfully asks for your support of two bills that would help protect important pollinators and their habitats: the ***Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act of 2021*** and the ***Monarch Act of 2021***, both introduced in the Senate by Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon and introduced in the House of Representatives by Representatives Jimmy Panetta and Salud Carbajal of California.

Taryn Wilson

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, preserve and restore the Cape's natural resources. We believe the above-mentioned legislation will provide a critical step forward in addressing the sharp decline in populations of pollinator species across the U.S.



Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act of 2021

The ***Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act of 2021*** would benefit pollinators on roadsides and highway rights-of-way by providing \$5,000,000 for each fiscal year from 2022 through 2028 for grants to state departments of transportation, Native American tribes, and federal land management agencies to:

- Plant or seed native grasses and wildflowers to enhance pollinator habitat;
- Promote early successional vegetation and limit disturbance during periods of highest use by target pollinator species;
- Implement integrated vegetation management plans; and
- Remove nonnative grasses from planting and seeding mixes, except for use as nurse or cover crops.

Pollinators are critical to our food supply as well as to the health of ecosystems. A diversity of pollinators is vital for pollination of more than 100 food crops as well as 80 percent of all wild plants existing on Earth. A recent study has determined that pollinators contribute \$34 billion to the U.S. economy.

Wild pollinators such as the monarch butterfly and a number of bumble bee species are in decline. Many native wild bee species are at risk of extinction—including over 25 percent of North American bumble bees. Various studies from across the U.S. show that butterflies are in steep decline, with monarch butterfly populations having declined by over 80 percent in the eastern U.S. and over 99.9 percent in western states.

Transportation rights-of-way are a significant resource for pollinator conservation, with more than 12 million acres of land in roadsides across the nation. Through this legislation, roadsides can benefit pollinators by providing foraging habitat with places to breed, nest, and overwinter. Many can serve as corridors, linking patches of fragmented habitat. In landscapes that have been highly altered, roadsides are some of the last remaining habitat for pollinators. Transportation agencies can adjust practices to help pollinators without compromising safety or other primary objectives.

Monarch Act of 2021

The ***Monarch Act of 2021*** will provide funding to support projects to restore, enhance and manage the western monarch's overwintering and breeding habitats to support conservation of wild monarch populations in the western U.S. It does so by authorizing the appropriation of \$12.5 million per year for the next five years to the Western Monarch Butterfly Rescue Fund to provide grants for conservation projects and \$12.5 million per year for the next five years to facilitate the implementation of the Western Monarch Butterfly Conservation Plan prepared by

the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

The decline of monarch butterflies across the U.S. is primarily due to loss of their habitat—including the milkweed and wildflowers that they need from spring to fall, and the forested areas in western states where they overwinter—as well as pesticides and climate change. Monarch butterflies and their habitat remain unprotected after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s recent decision that the species is “warranted but precluded” from listing under the Endangered Species Act. The **Monarch Act of 2021** will provide a substantial investment in conservation activities that will directly support the recovery of wild monarch butterflies.

The **Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act of 2021** and **Monarch Act of 2021** offer important actions to be taken to help address the alarming decline in critical pollinator species. We respectfully urge your support of these two bills.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director