

**Minnesota House of Representatives, Environment and
Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee**

Testimony in Support of HF 718

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The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation supports HF 718 as it allows targeted and valuable local control over pesticide use beyond what state law allows.

This bill reinstates a narrow decision making power to local governments to respond, if they wish, to potential risks posed by the use of pollinator-lethal pesticides in their own communities.

Towns and cities face unique concerns from pesticide use. For example, impervious surfaces and storm drain systems can lead to significant runoff into waterways, and gardens and other greenspaces-- which act as important refuges for wildlife-- can be contaminated with pesticides that compromise the health of at-risk pollinator species.

Current state law preempts local governments from creating laws around pesticide use. This preemption hamstring local decision makers from governing and responding to the pesticide concerns of their community. Federal pesticide law acts as a floor for state and local government to build on. As such, state law should not act as a ceiling. To be more specific, federal pesticide regulation establishes a partnership between local, state, and federal governments, recognizing that all levels of government are necessary for comprehensive pesticide laws. This partnership has resulted in a number of important solutions to pesticide problems. When localities have their hands tied with preemption mandates, communities are prevented from solving regional pesticide issues that may not be applicable on a state-wide basis.

Since 1987, Minnesota statute has preempted local governments from passing a number of laws that would address the application, registration, handling, use, and disposal of pesticides. This bill restores a specific and uniform degree of local control to make decisions regarding use and application if a city chooses to do so. Local control over pesticide decisions is already in place in many states. Currently a number of states allow full local control over pesticides: Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, Utah and Vermont.

This bill would provide cities with the choice to take targeted steps to protect pollinators and the environment in their own communities. Already some cities are interested in taking steps to protect our state bee, the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, as it is in severe decline rangewide, but is still hanging on in some areas of Minnesota, particularly in urban spaces. With the enactment of HF 718, communities would have the ability to take strategic and well-defined steps to help support this imperiled species.

Thank you.