

March 23, 2021

HF 718: Cities authorized to adopt pesticide control ordinances

Chairman Hansen and Committee members:

By now I'm sure you have heard from constituents who are very worried about the increasing population declines in our native insect pollinators, be they bumble bees, solitary bees, honeybees, beetles, flies, or butterflies. We need our native insects to pollinate many food crops, but equally important is their function in maintaining the integrity of our wild places, our forests, wetlands, prairies, savannas, deserts, etc. Honey bees are critical in pollinating certain food crops, but they do not sustain natural areas.

Beekeepers are losing more bees each year and some native bumblebee populations are also shrinking due to the lack of healthy foraging habitat and the prevalence of pesticides on the landscape and in our water ways. In addition to the heavy use of chemicals in agriculture monocrops, the use in urban settings is also significant, and research in the US and Europe confirms the impact of neonicotinoids and many other chemicals on pollinators in their environment.

Unlike in many states, MN state pesticide preemption laws do not permit local residents their right to decide if minimum pesticide standards set by states and federal laws are appropriate for their own communities, because local pesticide choices were removed in 1989.

HF 718 will allow a city to discriminate between cosmetic use in urban areas and agricultural use, setting in place a tiered decision making process to allow only what is necessary, and IF the city chooses to do so. Granting local control does not increase regulation, but it allows communities the option to do what is safest and appropriate in their yards, schools, and local public areas.

Please support HF 718 to help MN communities encourage healthy habitats that benefit pollinators.

Thank you,
Margot Monson, Entomologist, Beekeeper