

February 14, 2023

Chair Klevorn and Committee Members:

I urge you to support HF 734 allowing native grasses and other native plantings on private properties.

As an entomologist who has observed the gradual decline in pollinators and other beneficial insects, birds, and amphibians over the past two decades, I am worried that we will not be able to turn this crisis around without serious commitment by everyone who cares about the environment taking very bold actions.

These losses are due primarily to the ubiquitous use of systemic pesticides on rural and urban landscapes, and the loss of the nutritional resources these animals need that are found in habitats with native plantings.

We all may not be able to do everything to help our degraded environment, but we all can do some things to improve and conserve it, even from our yards and gardens. This involves far more than planting flowers for butterflies, because it is our native bees, not honey bees, that are critical to the health of all our wild natural habitats, including forests, prairies, deserts, savannahs, and wetlands. It is our native bees that are absolutely necessary to ecological integrity, and without a diversity of native pollinators and other beneficial insects, our environment will not survive. By providing native plantings wherever possible that are free of any chemicals in the form of systemic pesticides we can offer the kind of habitat and nutrients to sustain thousands of insect species, and many of those in turn will be the food for birds and amphibians.

Be it through the foods we eat or the gardens we grow, we are all connected to insect life on this planet, and allowing native plantings on private properties is one way each of us can contribute to a healthy environment. The greater the diversity of native plantings the greater the diversity of the insects, with which they evolved, including the predatory species that consume pest insects.

After years of gardening experience I can assure you that if you plant native species, pollinators and other beneficial species will come.

Please give HF 734 your thoughtful consideration.

Thank you,  
Margot Monson

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