

RE:HF 1843 and HF 1611 Support

March 19, 2025

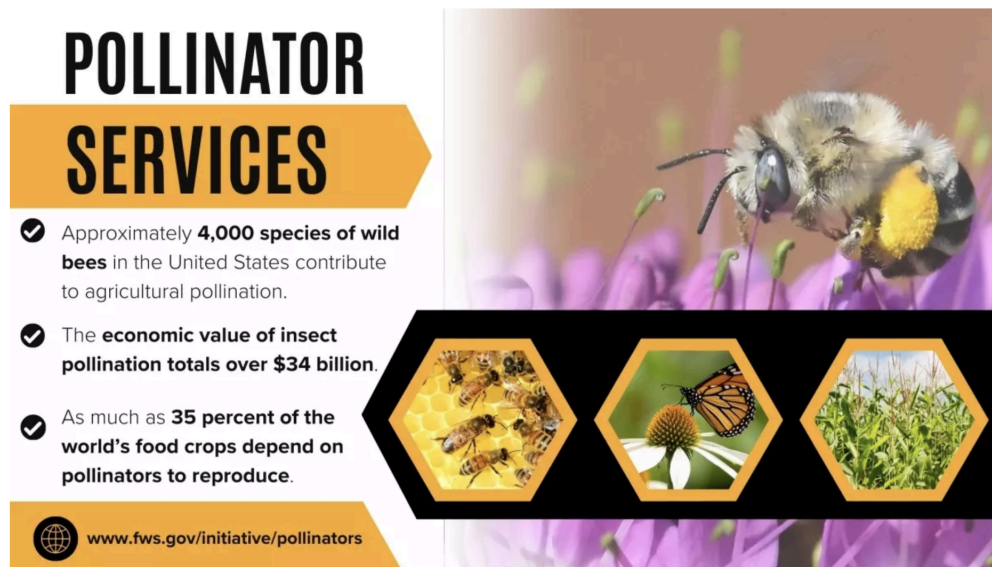
Dear Chair Fischer and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee,

We write on behalf of the DFL Environmental Caucus. Our mission is to educate and mobilize the citizens of Minnesota to address the climate crisis and to protect, preserve, and restore the natural environment.

We strongly support [HF1843](#) (Rehm), which would expand funding for the Lawns to legumes program. In a landscape that is increasingly covered with monoculture lawns and corn or soybean crops, it is vital that we provide habitat with pollinator friendly plants. Habitat loss and pesticide use have contributed to a 20% drop in butterfly populations and an 80% decline in the last 20 years in our native Rusty Patched Bumble bee species. Pollinators including butterflies, moths, bees, beetles, and flies play an important role in ecosystems. According to the [Minnesota DNR](#),

The plants they pollinate provide food and habitat for other animals, buffer waterways, and store carbon. Without pollinators, we would not have many nutritious fruits, vegetables, and nuts like blueberries, squash, and almonds. Pollinator conservation provides economic benefits through improved crop pollination, and intrinsic value in beautiful, flowering landscapes.

The [US Fish and Wildlife Services](#) puts the economic value of insect pollinators at over \$34 million.



POLLINATOR SERVICES

- ✓ Approximately **4,000 species of wild bees** in the United States contribute to agricultural pollination.
- ✓ The **economic value of insect pollination totals over \$34 billion.**
- ✓ As much as **35 percent of the world's food crops** depend on pollinators to reproduce.


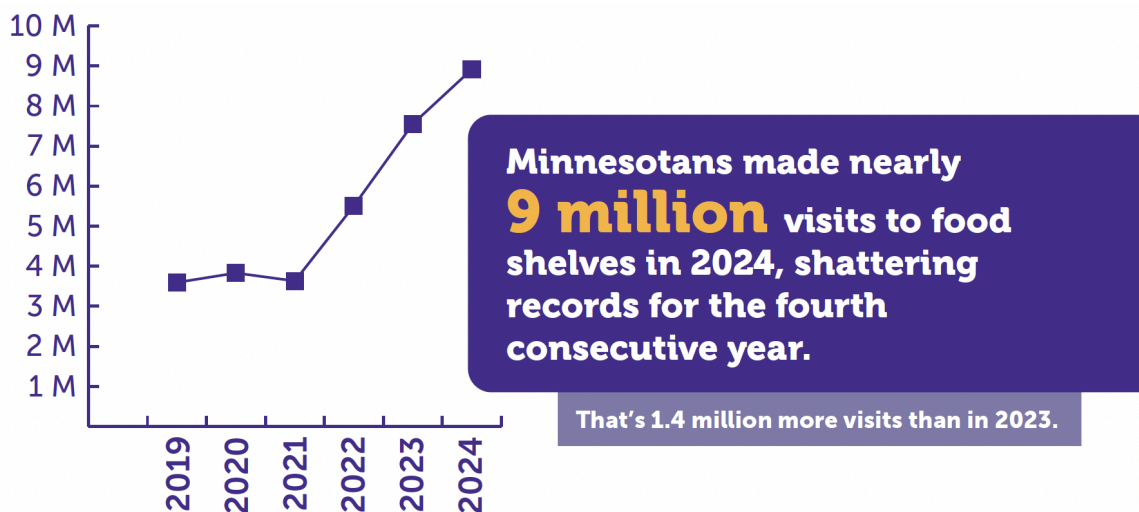
 www.fws.gov/initiative/pollinators

Image Details

We also strongly support [HF1611](#) (Hansen) Lawns to Lunch pilot program. This bill creates a pilot program to help community and residential gardens grow healthy food for non-commercial use. Many lower income residents do not currently have access to healthy food. If fully implemented, this program has the potential to help fill some of the gaps created by cuts to federal food assistance programs. According to [The Food Group](#), food insecurity is a grim reality for 26% of Minnesota households with at least one child, and 40% of households of color.

A [statewide hunger survey](#) conducted by Second Harvest Heartland and Wilder Research found that 26% of Minnesota households with at least one child under 18 years old were food insecure in 2024. They also recorded wide disparities among households of color with 40% reporting food insecurity compared to 20% of households overall.



Minnesotans made 2.5x more visits in 2024 than pre-pandemic 2019.

We urge you to support HF 1843, Lawns to Legumes, for the benefits it provides for our ecosystems and economy. We also urge you to support HF 1611, Lawns to Lunch, to help increase food security for Minnesota families.

Thank you for your service.

Veda Kanitz, Greg Laden, Legislative Committee Cochairs
Megan Bond, Chair
DFL Environmental Caucus

