February 16, 2023


To Chair Klevorn and the State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of the members of Conservation Minnesota residing in all 87 Minnesota counties, we write today to support House File 734 (Hansen, R.).

The buzz around pollinators and native landscapes has been growing exponentially in this state. With early help from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, the award winning "Lawns to Legumes" program has helped thousands of interested property owners transform monoculture turf grass lawns into thriving pollinator habitat. This might be the year where Lawns to Legumes grows from a unique ENRTF project into a regular and reliable state program.

Minnesota's Pollinator Action Framework recognizes the threats that human activity has caused to hundreds of diverse pollinators including numerous species of bees, butterflies, moths and beetles. One specific bee, the rusty patched bumblebee, is an endangered species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. The Minnesota legislature recognized the symbolic importance of the rusty patched bumblebee in 2019 and officially designated it as the state bee.

Conservation Minnesota members, and Minnesotans across the state, are interested in growing their own pollinator gardens or installing other native landscapes to help build suitable habitat for the rusty patched bumblebee and other pollinators. However, some property owners have encountered challenges when trying to do their part. Some municipalities have policies on the books that prevent property owners from converting turf grass landscapes into more pollinator friendly landscapes. HF 734 will fix this problem.

We thank Rep. Hansen and the coauthors for their willingness to help Minnesotans build pollinator friendly native landscapes that will, "give bees a chance."

Thank you for supporting HF734,

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