



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 29, 2019

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### **Preserving Wisconsin's Declining Pollinator Populations**

MADISON – Rep. Melissa Sargent (D-Madison), issued the following statement to introduce LRB-4138 which creates a task force on pollinator health for the purpose of studying successful public education campaigns, the impact of pesticides on pollinator populations, and other issues relevant to declining pollinator health:

“Protecting our state’s natural pollinators is absolutely crucial, yet too often goes forgotten as humans continue to develop the land we inhabit. We depend on pollinators both agriculturally and economically, to secure our community’s quality of life and health. As a state we must do more to understand the importance of pollinators in our community, and to learn how we can collectively bolster environmental health and develop a positive coexistence between ecosystems and our community.

We owe one in every three bites of food to pollinators. In Wisconsin alone, pollinator-dependent crops account for over \$55 million in annual production while honey and beeswax account for \$3.5 million. Yet, during the past 30-years, our nation and state has seen unprecedented pollinator declines as a result of invasive species, human development, improper usage of pesticides, and miss management of public lands. If we do not take meaningful action to improve pollinator health, populations will continue to decline, and our state’s agricultural sector will suffer.

I am proud to introduce LRB-4138, which creates a task force on native pollinator health. This task force consists 15 members, including two nonvoting members from the Senate and two nonvoting members from the Assembly. Both the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection will appoint a broad range of stakeholders, including advocacy groups for farmers, beekeepers, and small business owners who rely on adequate pollinator health. This task force is charged with the responsibility of developing public awareness and educational programs regarding pollinator health, researching effective pesticide applications from other states and countries, and examining other relevant sources of pollinator population decline.

With this legislation we can move Wisconsin forward in restoring pollinator health. Taking action by increasing public awareness and education efforts, while studying the effects of improper pesticide usage will allow Wisconsin to ensure the well-being of native pollinators and our state’s economy. By promoting pollinator health we can help Wisconsin achieve a bright, healthy, and buzzing future.”

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*Melissa Sargent is a State Representative in the Wisconsin Assembly, representing the 48th Assembly District, which covers the east and north sides of the city of Madison and the village of Maple Bluff*