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HOUSE BILL 2478

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State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Representatives Peterson, Stambaugh, Buys, Dent, Gregerson,  
Riccelli, Orwall, Stanford, Blake, and Sawyer

1 AN ACT Relating to supporting agricultural production, including  
2 that of apiarists, through the preservation of forage for  
3 pollinators; amending RCW 17.10.145; adding a new section to chapter  
4 43.220 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The state noxious weed control board  
7 shall conduct a pilot project that evaluates the options, methods,  
8 and costs of purposefully replacing pollen-rich and nectar-rich  
9 noxious weeds, such as knapweeds and nonnative thistles, which are  
10 productive forage plants for honey bees, with either native or  
11 noninvasive, nonnative forage plants that can produce similar levels  
12 of pollen and nectar with a similar bloom succession to support  
13 populations of honey bees and other pollinators. The goal of the  
14 pilot project is to develop optional guidance and best practices for  
15 landowners and land managers faced with the removal of noxious weeds.  
16 The pilot project must be developed to maximize the dual public  
17 benefits of reducing noxious weeds in Washington and supporting  
18 agricultural production through the maintenance of access to  
19 seasonally balanced pollen-rich and nectar-rich plants for honey bees  
20 and other pollinators.

1 (2)(a) In implementing the pilot project, the state noxious weed  
2 control board must coordinate with willing landowners to provide  
3 goods or services, such as plant starts and seed packs, necessary to  
4 replace noxious weeds with either native or noninvasive, nonnative  
5 plants or to create, in conjunction with noxious weed control  
6 efforts, new seasonally balanced forage patches for honey bees and  
7 other pollinators.

8 (b) Priority in participation in the pilot project must be given  
9 to interested private landowners located in areas where the dual  
10 benefits of the pilot project can be maximized. However, public  
11 landowners or managers may also be considered for participation. No  
12 landowner may be required to participate in the pilot project either  
13 directly or as a condition of a permit or other governmental action.

14 (3) The implementation details of the pilot project required by  
15 this section are at the sole discretion of the state noxious weed  
16 control board, including the selection of pilot project partners and  
17 participants. However, pilot project partners should be located in  
18 both eastern and western Washington. The state noxious weed control  
19 board may coordinate with the state conservation commission or  
20 individual conservation districts in the implementation of the pilot  
21 project if the state noxious weed control board finds that  
22 coordination would be beneficial.

23 (4) The state noxious weed control board must issue a report to  
24 the legislature, consistent with RCW 43.01.036, that outlines the  
25 successes and challenges of the pilot project, including the  
26 development of the tools in this subsection. This report must be  
27 presented by October 31, 2020, and include:

28 (a) A description of the following tools:

29 (i) A list of suitable pollen-rich forage plant alternatives to  
30 noxious weeds, taking into account traits such as nectar and pollen  
31 quality, bloom succession, growth requirements, and habitat type;

32 (ii) A list of seed and plant start suppliers that may be able to  
33 provide pollen-rich forage plant alternatives to noxious weeds; and

34 (iii) A matrix, based on the pilot project, to provide guidelines  
35 to landowners and land managers when replacing noxious weeds or  
36 creating new pollen-rich forage patches;

37 (b) An assessment scale that may be used by landowners, land  
38 managers, and the apiary industry to rate the usefulness of the tools  
39 described in this subsection; and

1 (c) Any recommendations for extending the pilot project or using  
2 the lessons learned as part of Washington's overall noxious weed  
3 control strategy.

4 (5) This section expires June 30, 2021.

5 **Sec. 2.** RCW 17.10.145 and 1997 c 353 s 18 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 (1) All state agencies shall control noxious weeds on lands they  
8 own, lease, or otherwise control through integrated pest management  
9 practices. Agencies shall develop plans in cooperation with county  
10 noxious weed control boards to control noxious weeds in accordance  
11 with standards in this chapter.

12 (2) All state agencies' lands must comply with this chapter,  
13 regardless of noxious weed control efforts on adjacent lands.

14 (3) While conducting planned projects to ensure compliance with  
15 this chapter, all agencies must give preference, when deemed  
16 appropriate by the acting agency for the project and targeted  
17 resource management goals, to replacing pollen-rich or nectar-rich  
18 noxious weeds with native forage plants that are beneficial for all  
19 pollinators, including honey bees.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.220  
21 RCW to read as follows:

22 Any corps project that involves the removal of noxious weeds  
23 must, when deemed appropriate for the project goals by the project  
24 sponsor, include the planting of pollen-rich and nectar-rich native  
25 plants to provide forage for all pollinators, including honey bees.

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