ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL 2478

AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

Passed Legislature - 2016 Regular Session

State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session

By Representatives Peterson, Stambaugh, Buys, Dent, Gregerson, Riccelli, Orwall, Stanford, Blake, Sawyer, Tharinger, Fitzgibbon, Walkinshaw, Tarleton, McBride, Moscoso, Bergquist, Pollet, S. Hunt, Goodman, and Wilcox

Read first time 01/13/16. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources.

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

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

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

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

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

(3) The implementation details of the pilot project required by this section are at the sole discretion of the state noxious weed control board, including the selection of pilot project partners and participants. However, pilot project partners should be located in both eastern and western Washington. The state noxious weed control board:

(a) Shall coordinate with the county noxious weed control boards in which pilot projects are located, unless the county does not have a local noxious weed control board; and

(b) May coordinate with the state conservation commission or individual conservation districts in the implementation of the pilot project if the state noxious weed control board finds that coordination would be beneficial.

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

(a) A description of the following tools:

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

(ii) A list of seed and plant start suppliers that may be able to provide pollen-rich forage plant alternatives to noxious weeds. The list may only include suppliers who are willing to ensure the identity and purity of seed through appropriate testing performed or approved by the Washington state department of agriculture or by any

other agency authorized under the laws of any state, territory, or possession that has standards and procedures approved by the United States secretary of agriculture to ensure the identity and purity of seed; and

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

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

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

(5) This section expires June 30, 2021.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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