

HOUSE No. 4603

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 28, 2022.

The committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by resolve, Senate, No. 573) of Jason M. Lewis, Mary S. Keefe and Adam Gomez for legislation to protect pollinator habitat, and the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 956) of Mary S. Keefe and others for an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) of opportunities for improving pollinator health, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4603) ought to pass.

For the committee,

MINDY DOMB.

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act to protect pollinator habitat.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, there shall
2 be a special commission established to study statewide opportunities for improving pollinator
3 health by increasing and enhancing native pollinator habitat. The commission shall focus on
4 identifying statewide opportunities for enhancing and expanding pollinator habitat in both
5 developed and natural areas such as farm field borders, forest borders, residential areas, parks,
6 urban areas, industrial areas, energy transmission corridors, energy generating facilities and
7 transportation corridors. The commission shall consider enhancing and expanding pollinator
8 habitat for a broad range of native and managed pollinators including but not limited to wild and
9 managed bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, ants, bats and birds. The commission shall report its
10 findings, including any proposed legislation, to the house and senate committees on ways and
11 means and the joint committee on environment, natural resources and agriculture no later than
12 March 1, 2023.

13 The commission shall consist of 17 members including: 1 member of the senate; 1
14 member of the house of representatives; 1 member of the senate appointed by the minority leader

15 of the senate; 1 member of the house of representatives appointed by the minority leader of the
16 house of representatives; the secretary of energy and environmental affairs or a designee, who
17 shall serve as chair; the commissioner of the division of fisheries and wildlife, or a designee; the
18 commissioner of agricultural resources, or a designee; the commissioner of environmental
19 protection, or a designee; and 11 people to be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a
20 University of Massachusetts faculty member specializing in the science of pollinator health, 1 of
21 whom shall represent an advocacy group for farmers, 1 of whom shall represent an advocacy
22 group for organic farmers, 1 of whom shall represent an advocacy group for foresters, 1 of whom
23 shall be a commercial beekeeper, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the University of
24 Massachusetts Extension with knowledge in crops which rely on pollinators and pollinator
25 health; 1 of whom shall represent an advocacy group dedicated to the protection of pollinators
26 and invertebrates, 1 of whom shall be a beekeeper representing a regional or statewide
27 beekeeping organization, 1 of whom shall represent an advocacy group for nurseries, 1 of whom
28 shall represent a membership based non-profit advocacy group dedicated to land protection, and
29 1 who shall have expertise in native wildlife ecology.

30 (b) The special commission shall examine issues relevant to pollinator habitat and health,
31 including: (i) assessing current laws and regulations in the commonwealth and other jurisdictions
32 related to protecting pollinators and pollinator health and their effectiveness; (ii) studying public
33 education and outreach plans regarding pollinator habitat that have been successful in other
34 jurisdictions; (iii) identifying adequacy of funding for efforts to promote or protect pollinator
35 habitat; (iv) investigating the best practices used by other jurisdictions to gather and report data
36 on populations of pollinators; (v) evaluating existing best management practices for promoting
37 pollinator health including, but not limited to, foraging and proper food source diversity; (vi)

38 studying the use of agricultural and nonagricultural lands, such as transportation corridors,
39 energy transmission corridors, parks, and working forests, and how they may be used to provide
40 pollinator forage and unique opportunities to increase pollinator populations; (vii) researching
41 and identifying ways to expand and coordinate public education programs outlining steps
42 individuals and businesses can take to help address the loss of pollinator habitat; (viii)
43 identifying opportunities for public or private incentives to increase available pollinator habitat,
44 including, but not limited to, clean energy programs, climate resilience programs, nature-based
45 solutions, public land protection, and urban agriculture and horticulture; and (ix) identifying
46 opportunities and making recommendations for the increased planting of pollinator-friendly
47 plants on state-owned land.

48 (c) All meetings of the special commission shall be open to the public. The first meeting
49 of the special commission shall occur no later than September 1, 2022.