

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Executive Department



Governor Tim Walz

Executive Order 19-28; Rescinding Executive Order 16-07

Restoring Healthy, Diverse Pollinator Populations that Sustain and Enhance Minnesota's Environment, Economy, and Way of Life

I, Tim Walz, Governor of the State of Minnesota, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and applicable statutes, issue the following Executive Order:

Honey bees and a number of native pollinator species have experienced declines in Minnesota and across the country due to a variety of pressures including habitat loss, pesticides, climate change, diseases, and parasites. Some of our native bee and butterfly species are now in danger of extinction, and these declines suggest that other pollinators are also at risk. Because pollinators enable wild plants and many domestic crops to reproduce, they are essential to the health of our environment, economy, and way of life.

Our State acknowledges that:

- Pollinators sustain and enhance our environment. Insects and the native plants they pollinate form the foundation of food chains, providing food for birds and other wildlife. These plants also stabilize soil and prevent erosion, protect water quality, store carbon, and provide habitat. By conserving the diversity of pollinators, we promote the diversity of life that makes Minnesota's landscapes resilient.
- Pollinators sustain and enhance our economy. Some Minnesota food crops, such as fruits, vegetables, and herbs, need insects for pollination. Honey bees and native pollinators contribute millions of dollars to our State's agricultural economy. Minnesota honey bees are important to the national agricultural economy, because many bees raised in the state spend their winters pollinating crops in other states. Pollinators indirectly benefit businesses in other sectors, such as landscaping companies.
- Pollinators sustain and enhance our way of life. Pollinator-dependent Minnesota food crops and cultural and medicinal plants are enjoyed throughout the State and are essential for maintaining a healthy diet and practicing cultural traditions. State symbols like the pink and white lady's-slipper, the Honeycrisp™ apple, and the monarch butterfly are part of Minnesota's identity. By pollinating flowering plants,

pollinators bring beauty to our landscapes, support and enrich our diets, and support healthy environments for hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, and other outdoor pursuits.

Our State is recognized as a leader in pollinator protection. It is a priority for state government to support and promote healthy and diverse pollinator populations that sustain and enhance Minnesota's environment, economy and way of life.

For these reasons, I order that the following state agencies work toward the three goals outlined below:

1. **Lands throughout Minnesota will support healthy, diverse, and abundant pollinator populations.** The Department of Natural Resources ("DNR") and the Board of Water and Soil Resources ("BWSR") will lead implementation of this goal. This includes:
 - a. Growing a diversity of native nectar- and pollen-rich flowering plants, providing continuous blooms from early spring through late fall, and encouraging management of lands to benefit pollinators wherever feasible.
 - b. Organizing larger efforts across institutional boundaries to support flowering habitats.
 - c. Supporting and promoting new and ongoing research, as well as developing new and existing management plans that increase flowering habitats.

Additionally:

- d. The DNR will coordinate implementation of Minnesota's portion of the Mid-America Monarch Butterfly Conservation Strategy and implement a strategy to maximize restoration, enhancement, and protection of habitat for pollinators on DNR-administered land consistent with the DNR's ecological, economic, and recreational mission and mandates.
- e. BWSR will direct work to restore and improve high quality pollinator habitat by:
 - i. Incorporating pollinator habitat into BWSR programs.
 - ii. Creating and updating program policies and technical resources to enhance opportunities for pollinator habitat restoration.
 - iii. Coordinating with other agencies, conservation partners, and researchers to use best available science.
 - iv. Guiding program and project improvements by measuring outcomes, evaluating restoration projects, and documenting successful restoration strategies.

- f. The Department of Transportation (“MnDOT”) will manage state-owned transportation properties and rights of way to create, protect, and enhance pollinator habitat.
 - g. The Department of Administration (“Admin”) will include pollinator-friendly plants in the Capitol Complex landscapes to the maximum extent practical.
 - h. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (“MPCA”) will manage closed landfills under its supervision to create, protect, and enhance pollinator habitat. MPCA will look for additional opportunities to support pollinator habitat in its agency work.
 - i. The Minnesota Zoological Garden shall implement its statutory role as an official pollinator bank for the State of Minnesota to help avert the extinction of threatened and endangered pollinator species through insurance breeding populations, reintroductions, research, and education programs.
 - j. All members of the Interagency Pollinator Protection Team (“IPPT”) (*see* 3.e.) will work together to identify additional opportunities to support increasing and enhancing pollinator habitat throughout the State.
2. **Minnesotans will use pesticides judiciously and only when necessary, to reduce harm to pollinators from pesticides while retaining economic strength.** The Department of Agriculture (“MDA”) will lead implementation of this goal. This includes:
- a. Promoting adoption of an integrated pest management (“IPM”) approach to protect pollinators from pesticides in all landscapes.
 - b. Supporting and promoting research and guidance to improve IPM.
 - c. Promoting IPM through coordinated outreach and education.

Additionally:

- d. MDA will continue to:
 - i. Provide educational resources to pesticide users to limit pesticide impact on pollinators.
 - ii. Explore innovative approaches to protect endangered and threatened pollinator habitat from the effects of pesticides.
 - iii. Review pesticide active ingredients to address concerns, as appropriate, to minimize impact on pollinator communities.
 - iv. Assist pesticide applicators in complying with the pollinator language on pesticide labels.

- v. Increase inspections and enforcement of label requirements for pesticides that are acutely toxic to pollinators.
- e. The DNR will ensure that it is using a robust and effective IPM approach to the pest management activities it pursues on the lands and waters it administers.
- f. Admin will support pollinator health on the State Capitol Complex, other state buildings, and where applicable on leased properties, including:
 - i. Prohibiting the use of neonicotinoid plants and pesticide products on the Capitol Complex, unless no other suitable product is available.
 - ii. Working with leased properties where the State is the sole (or majority) lessee to incorporate nonuse of neonicotinoid-applied plants and neonicotinoid pesticide products at leased buildings.
 - iii. Modifying the State's Design Guidelines and the Minnesota Sustainable Building Guidelines to incorporate a requirement that products must be neonicotinoid-free on all state funded projects, where practical.
 - iv. To the extent available and verifiable, accommodating the purchasing of neonicotinoid-free plants and pesticides in state contracts.
- g. All members of the IPPT (*see* 3.e.) will work together to identify additional opportunities to adopt, improve, and promote the application of IPM within their agencies and within other organizations.

3. **Minnesotans will understand, value, and actively support pollinators.** The Environmental Quality Board ("EQB") will lead implementation of this goal. This includes:

- a. Leading by example.
- b. Communicating to enhance understanding and drive action.
- c. Collaborating to amplify impact.

Additionally:

- d. The EQB will convene agency leadership to implement this Executive Order.
- e. The EQB will convene the IPPT to provide operational support, ensure interagency coordination, develop cross-agency policies and programs, and report on progress toward statewide goals in a report to the EQB by December 1 of each year. The IPPT shall consist of designees of the Departments of Administration, Agriculture, Corrections, Education, Health, Natural

Resources, Transportation, Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the Minnesota Zoological Garden. Other agencies may join the IPPT, as requested.

- f. The EQB will establish a civic engagement process, consistent with the vision for One Minnesota, to ensure public participation in pollinator policy and program development and build cross-sector partnerships. One point of emphasis will be identifying and supporting opportunities for statewide collaboration to conserve imperiled pollinators such as the rusty-patched bumble bee and the monarch butterfly.
- g. All members of the IPPT will work together to identify additional opportunities to help Minnesotans understand, value and support pollinators. Member agencies of the EQB will contribute available staff resources as requested by the EQB Chair for purposes of carrying out the work directed by this Executive Order.

4. Executive Order 16-07 is rescinded.

This Executive Order is effective fifteen days after publication in the State Register and filing with the Secretary of State. It will remain in effect until rescinded by proper authority or until it expires in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2018, section 4.035, subdivision 3.

Signed on April 5, 2019.



Tim Walz
Governor

Filed According to Law:



Steve Simon
Secretary of State

