

WHEREAS, the loss of pollinators is alarmingly high, with honey bee colonies experiencing significant annual losses, and with populations of native bees and other pollinators also in decline; and

WHEREAS, threats to pollinators concern the entire food system, where pollination services provided by honey bees and other essential pollinators account for one in every three bites of food and are valued at \$18 to \$27 billion in agricultural production annually in the United States; and

WHEREAS, these declines are driven by a number of factors including habitat loss, pesticide exposure, lack of forage; and

WHEREAS, the maintenance of healthy, biodiverse ecosystems depends upon the significant environmental services provided by pollinator species; and

WHEREAS, populations of pollinators can be supported and enhanced by increasing native habitat that is protected from pesticide contamination; and

WHEREAS, the use of neonicotinoids, the most widely used class of insecticides, is associated with lethal and sub-lethal effects on bees such as impaired foraging patterns, altered reproductive cycles, and impaired immune systems leading to increased susceptibility to pathogens and reduced colony survival; and

WHEREAS, a large and growing body of independent, peer-reviewed scientific studies demonstrate that existing neonicotinoid contamination in the environment can also adversely impact birds, aquatic organisms and the ecosystems they support; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that many pesticides, including fungicides and herbicides, can pose risks to already-compromised bees and other pollinators; and

WHEREAS, urban use of pesticides is often cosmetic and is not necessary to create and maintain landscapes, gardens or open spaces, given the availability of viable alternative practices and products; and

WHEREAS, integrated pest management – designed to manage pests by addressing the underlying sources of the pest problems and prioritizing techniques that are least toxic to humans and the environment – strengthens efforts to protect pollinators; and

WHEREAS, the City of Williamstown, WV can demonstrate its support for pollinators by maintaining pollinator habitat on land managed by the city and by encouraging residents to plant pollinator-friendly native and ornamental plants.

NOW, THEREFORE:

The City of Williamstown, WV will create, restore, and enhance safe and healthy pollinator habitat that provides forage and nesting resources, and that is protected from harmful pesticide contamination. The city will identify appropriate locations for creating and managing habitat, potentially including parks, open spaces, roadsides, and around facilities. Where possible, the city will seek habitat locations that facilitate habitat connectivity. As possible, the city will revise land management and mowing policies to allow wildflowers and other appropriate flowering forage species to bloom and flourish.

Habitat plantings by the city will include a diversity of flowering trees, shrubs, or forbs known to provide pollen and/or nectar to pollinators, with preference for ecologically appropriate native perennial species in newly planted or restored areas. Plantings should be designed to ensure that flowers are available throughout the growing season. Habitat should also include butterfly host plants as well as pollinator nesting sites such as undisturbed soil, undisturbed foliage, and pithy-stemmed plants.

The use of any neonicotinoid insecticides or other systemic insecticides that are highly toxic to bees are hereby prohibited on all property owned or operated by [the city]. [The city] shall not purchase or use landscaping materials, including plants and seeds, that have been treated with neonicotinoids.

Pest management on land owned or operated by the city will follow integrated pest management techniques. Pesticides will only be used on land owned or operated by the city when there is a justifiable need for the pesticide to be applied. A justified use is supported by evidence that a pest or disease outbreak exists or has strong potential to exist, and will cause significant harm. Pest management on land owned or operated by [the city] will also avoid cosmetic applications. The city will provide training on integrated pest management for employees who are responsible for pest management.

The city recognizes the importance of pollinators and their services, and will support and actively engage in efforts to educate the broader community about the actions it is taking. The city will encourage government entities, businesses, homeowners and homeowner associations operating within the city to participate by creating and maintaining native pollinator habitat. The city will urge these entities to only apply a pesticide when its use is justified and to not buy, sell or use products containing neonicotinoids or other systemic insecticides that are highly toxic to bees.