



## **Pollinator Friendly Resolution Best Practices**

Pollinator Friendly resolutions are a way to celebrate the pollinator friendly practices your municipality already has in place. They are also critical to changing practices to protect pollinators and are catalysts to bigger change in your communities, statewide and nationally. While all resolutions are pledges for pollinator protection, these best practices can add detail and scope to improve pollinator health in your community.

### **Why pass a pollinator friendly resolution?**

- **Pollinators like bees are critically important to our ecosystems and our food systems. And they're struggling.** As beekeepers in Minnesota in 2014-15, we lost 51% of our hives. Our over 400 species of native bee are also in decline.
- **The causes of pollinator decline are known.**
  - Our ecosystems no longer have the abundance of clean flowering plants pollinators need. Bees are hungry; they need more flowers. Wild bees also need habitat.
  - Pollinators are exposed to pollinator lethal insecticides, including neonicotinoid and other systemic insecticides, which are used prophylactically in land management, agriculture, and nursery practices.
  - Pollinators suffer from parasites and disease, including the honey bee parasite the varroa mite.
- **Minnesotans care deeply about bees.** As individuals, Minnesotans are doing what we can, choosing with our hearts, our dollars, and our trowels to help bees. It's not enough. We need to change policy to curb pollinator declines.
- **MN State law preempts smaller municipalities' ability to regulate pesticides,** but doesn't restrict a municipality's treatment of the land it manages. Passing a pollinator friendly resolution sends the message that you care about this issue and are doing what you can with your own land.
- **YOUR MUNICIPALITY CAN BE A NATIONAL LEADER ON THE ISSUE.** While a few cities have passed resolutions, this is a new trend, and one your municipality can be at the forefront of.

### **Key pieces of strong resolutions**

#### **Reducing pollinators' exposure to pollinator lethal insecticides by eliminating use of neonicotinoids and other systemic insecticides.**

Neonicotinoid pesticides are a driving factor behind pollinator decline. At high doses, neonics can kill bees, butterflies and songbirds outright. At lower doses, neonics impair pollinators' navigation, reproduction, communication, and immune system functioning. We're seeing drift with neonics-the USGS found them in 75% of tested waterways in the Midwest, and recent research found higher concentrations in the pollen of wildflowers surrounding coated canola rapeseed fields than in the pollen of the canola flowers the neonic was applied to. Beyond neonicotinoids, many other pesticides, on their own or in combination, weaken pollinator health.

1. Eliminate use of neonicotinoid and other systemic insecticides.
  - a. Neonicotinoids are one class of systemic insecticide, and other systemics, like Fipronil, are known to be toxic to pollinators. We're seeing federal movement toward increased regulation of neonics (hopefully), and we know, historically, when one chemical becomes restricted, industry replaces it with a similar compound, often with equal toxicities. Articulating "neonics and other systemic insecticides" in your resolution addresses concerns with current and future systemic insecticides.
2. Improving/ reassessing municipality Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plans. IPM is a land management strategy that emphasizes controlling pests with the least possible disruption to ecosystems, and is not a term we have a shared definition for. Use specific language around IPM policy change.
  - a. For example: *"Direct all city departments to develop an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program that requires site inspections, monitoring and prevention strategies, an evaluation on the need for pest control, and when pest control is warranted the use of structural, mechanical, biological and other nonchemical methods first, and if nontoxic options have been exhausted, the use of least-toxic pesticides that have been certified organic or are exempt from federal registration on all public grounds and exterior spaces within the city to protect pollinators."*
  - b. Track departments' IPM and pesticide use. If the number of departments with IPM plans or currently using neonics is unknown, an initial assessment to establish a baseline can be part of the resolution.
3. Defining exceptions very specifically.
  - a. Managed spaces like golf courses and premiere athletic fields have higher pesticides loads than most lawns. We know that pollinators don't traditionally visit spaces like premiere athletic fields or lawns for food, as there aren't many flowering plants, and pesticide exposure at the time of spray when applying according to label may be low. Yet, we know, in agricultural applications, these chemicals move to nearby flowering plants, to our groundwater and throughout the environment. Limit the number of exceptions, and define them specifically.
  - b. Seek out alternatives in the areas with exceptions. Pilot projects with more sustainable options including non-chemical controls. Many municipalities have written in pilots for alternative management in their areas of exception.
  - c. These are the sticking spaces nationally- everyone's having trouble thinking about transitioning away from systemic insecticide use in these spaces. **There is a real opportunity for national leadership in managing premiere athletic fields for pollinators.**
4. Transitioning to organic management.
 

While replacing a neonic with for an organic or pollinator friendly option is not often a one for one - chemicals like Merit are not easily replaced with a less toxic chemical alternative in treatment of Japanese beetle larva for example- there is national precedent in transitioning to organic management. With increased soil health insecticides are no longer needed. National resources, like Beyond Pesticides ([www.beyondpesticides.org](http://www.beyondpesticides.org)) will provide free training for municipalities who pilot organic management.

### **Increasing Clean Pollinator Forage in the City**

Pollinators are hungry; they need pollen and nectar sources all season long. Our over 400 species of native bee- and all our other insect pollinators- also need places to live.

At Pollinate Minnesota, we're working toward a MN that's better for pollinators and people.

[www.pollinatemn.org](http://www.pollinatemn.org)

[erin@pollinatemn.org](mailto:erin@pollinatemn.org), 612.245.6384

5. Increase pollinator friendly habitat.
  - a. Use native, sustainably and locally sourced seeds and plants when possible.
  - b. Increase forage by over seeding managed lawns with clover.
  - c. Decrease herbicide use on managed lawns to increase flowering plants. Dandelions, clover, and even creeping charlie provide critical food for our hungry bees, often at times of year when they need it most.
6. Consider unique land management relationships; think about all the ways your municipality interacts with land.
  - a. Increasing habitat on land you own, including parks, vacant lots, fire and police stations, water works, other municipality facilities.
  - b. Consider changing regulations to increase pollinator forage.
    - i. For example: Encourage pollinator friendly planting/systemic insecticide free landscaping in new building development.
7. Source clean plants.
  - a. Amend purchasing policy to require plants be free of pollinator lethal insecticides. Many nursery-grown plants are treated with systemic insecticides, but truly pollinator friendly plants that aren't treated are becoming more available. Ask for them.
  - b. Adopt clear guidelines against the use of pesticide-treated plants. Consider pollinator-friendly amendments to your municipality's Vegetation Management Policy.

**Include goals, timelines, and mechanisms to track success of the resolution.**

8. Include dates and goal related specifics, from the amount of land transitioned to the number of city departments who report IPM, to make your commitment to pollinator health clear to the public.
9. Name a department to maintain an internal resource for other municipality departments and be responsible for monitoring resolution success.
10. To celebrate an increase in the amount of pollinator forage, you need to know how much you started with. Determining a baseline can be a part of the first stage in your resolution.

**Communicate!**

11. Include public communication and education in your resolution.
  - a. Informed the public of your resolution and ongoing progress.
  - b. Engage and encourage the public to change their practices to be more pollinator friendly.
  - c. Name a department responsible for this communication.

**Engage in broader policy change.**

12. Communicate your resolution to your elected officials, other government departments and agencies, both locally and nationally, including agencies that manage land within your municipality (like the Department of Transportation.)
13. Include statements in support of state and federal pollinator protection initiatives. An example from Minneapolis's resolution: *"Be it further Resolved that the City of Minneapolis will continue to advocate at the State and Federal level for increased authority to address the non-agricultural use of pesticides, and for other pollinator-friendly policies"* and from Seattle's: *"The Mayor and the Seattle City Council strongly urges the US House of Representatives to pass the Save America's Pollinators Act (HR 2692)."*

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## RESOURCES

- NATIONAL. Beyond Pesticides ([www.beyondpesticides.org](http://www.beyondpesticides.org)) will bring courses on transitioning to organic land management to you! The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation ([www.xerces.org/](http://www.xerces.org/)) has excellent plant lists and resources for increasing habitat. The Pesticide Action Network (<http://www.panna.org/food-farming-derailed/bees-crisis>) and the Center for Food Safety (<http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/issues/304/pollinators-and-pesticides>) are good resources on ongoing science.
- LOCAL: Pollinate Minnesota ([www.pollinatemn.org](http://www.pollinatemn.org)), Pollinator Friendly Alliance ([www.pollinatorfriendly.org](http://www.pollinatorfriendly.org)) and Humming for Bees ([www.hummingforbees.org](http://www.hummingforbees.org)) have each spearheaded resolutions in their communities and consult with interested communities.

