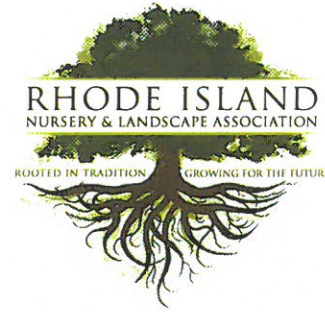




**Audubon Society
of Rhode Island**



February 15, 2018

Honorable Nicholas Mattiello, Speaker of the House
Honorable Arthur Handy, Chair House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Pollinator Working Group Report and Recommendations

Honorable Speaker Mattiello and Chair Handy:

On behalf of the Pollinator Working Group (PWG), we are pleased to present you with the enclosed Pollinator Working Group Report for 2018.

Recognizing the importance of pollinators and the extreme stresses they face, the RI General Assembly directed the RI Department of Environmental Management (RI DEM) to form the PWG to make recommendations on how to maintain, protect and enhance pollinator health and habitats in the state.

The PWG has created a strong partnership between representatives from agriculture and plant-based industry, beekeepers, scientists from the University of Rhode Island, environmental organizations and state agencies. The PWG is pleased to see proactive pollinator enhancement projects underway by RI DEM on state lands and under consideration by the RI Department of Transportation (RI DOT) along highway rights of way. The PWG also supports the Senate's Special Legislative Commission to Study Pesticide Control Regulations. Specific recommendations for RI DEM, RI DOT and the Study Commission to consider are included in the report.

The PWG strongly supports public education on the importance of pollinators. We are planning to celebrate pollinator week (June 18 – 24, 2018) by illuminating the State House with yellow and black lights and will be hosting a pollinator press conference and fair at the State House. As the time draws nearer, we will follow up with invitations to you both.

The PWG requests increased funding for RI DEM to ensure that they have the staff needed to oversee the proper and safe application of pesticides, provide technical support to the state's beekeepers and ensure that mosquito control practices have minimal impact on essential pollinators. We would like to work with you and the

Governor to ensure the State of Rhode Island has the necessary funding to protect pollinators from pesticide exposures.

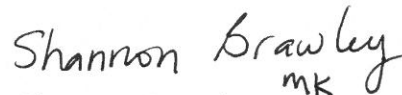
While this could have been a contentious topic for examination the positive outcome is one Governor Raimondo and the R.I. General Assembly should be proud of and embrace as part of Rhode Island's bright future.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Rhode Island. Please let us know if you have questions about this report.

Respectfully submitted,



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