

HCS HB 1209 -- SOLAR POLLINATOR HABITAT ACT

SPONSOR: Knight

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Agriculture Policy by a vote of 22 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of

This bill establishes the "Missouri Solar Pollinator Habitat Act," which requires the University of Missouri - Extension Service, in consultation with other state and nongovernmental agencies, to publish a scorecard that sets out criteria for claiming that a solar site is pollinator-friendly or provides benefits to pollinators. The scorecard must be available on the University of Missouri Extension's website withing six months of the effective date of the bill.

An owner of a solar site implementing site management practices specified in the bill may claim that the site is pollinator-friendly or provides benefits to pollinators if the site and its vegetation management plan adhere to the criteria set out in the scorecard. An owner making a claim that it is pollinator-friendly or provides benefits to pollinators must make available to the public, and provide to the extension, and a nonprofit solar industry trade association a copy of its completed scorecard and vegetation management plan.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill will promote the planting of natural vegetation to increase habitat for pollinators, which are vital to agriculture in the state. There has been a 33% decline in the bee population. Bees are necessary to pollinate crops and can increase crop yield by up to 18%.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Knight and the National Resource Defense Council.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that many farmers in the state are already implementing practices to increase pollinators. It costs between \$300 and \$500 to plant an acre of wildflowers.

Testifying on the bill was the Missouri Department Of Conservation.