

March 17, 2021

Our coalition of diverse organizations collectively represents millions of people across the U.S. We are writing today to show our support for Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act of 2021.

Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act of 2021 would provide \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2028 for grants to benefit pollinators on roadsides and highway rights-of-way, including the planting and seeding of native, locally appropriate grasses and wildflowers, and incorporating the monarch butterfly's host plant, milkweed.

Pollinators are critical to our food supply as well as to the health of ecosystems. A diversity of pollinators are vital for pollination of more than 100 food crops as well as 80% of all wild plants on the planet. A recent study found that pollinators are worth \$34 billion to the US economy.

Wild pollinators such as the monarch butterfly and a number of bumble bee species are in decline, and beekeepers in the United States have reported significant losses of managed European honey bee hives. Studies show that many native wild bee species are at risk of extinction—including over 25% of North American bumble bees. Long term studies from across the United States show that butterflies are in steep decline. Monarch butterfly populations have declined by over 80% in the eastern US and over 99.9% in the western states. The western population of monarchs is on verge of collapse. Recently the US Fish and Wildlife Service found that the monarch butterfly met the criteria for being listed as threatened under the US Endangered Species Act.

With more than 12 million acres of land in roadsides in the US alone, transportation rights-of-way are a significant, yet often overlooked resource for pollinator conservation. Roadsides can benefit pollinators by providing foraging habitat; places to breed, nest, and overwinter; and may act as corridors, linking patches of fragmented habitat. In landscapes that have been highly altered, roadsides are some of the last remaining habitat for pollinators. The good news is that transportation agencies can adjust practices to help pollinators without compromising safety or other primary objectives.

The Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act of 2021 will help state departments of transportation, Native American tribes, and federal land management agencies make roadsides more pollinator friendly.

This bill would provide grants to:

- Promote early successional vegetation and limit disturbance during periods of highest use by target pollinator species;
- Implement integrated vegetation management plans;

- Plant or seed of native, locally appropriate grasses and wildflowers, including milkweed host plants for monarch butterflies, to enhance pollinator habitat; and
- Remove nonnative grasses from planting and seeding mixes, except for use as nurse or cover crops.

Please help bees, monarchs, and other butterflies by supporting the Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act of 2021.

Sincerely,

Aerulean Plant Identification Systems Inc.  
American Public Gardens Association  
Azul  
Blank Park Zoo  
California Association of Resource Conservation Districts  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Corazon Latino  
Duluth Monarch Buddies  
Earth Discovery Institute  
Entomological Society of America  
Environment America  
Ford Field and River Club  
Friends of the Earth  
GMO/Toxin Free USA  
Grayson Neighborhood Council  
GreenLatinos  
GT Butterfly House & Bug Zoo  
Hispanic Access Foundation  
Houston Wilderness  
Kansas Rural Center  
Leaders4EARTH  
Milkweed Matters  
Monarch Alert, Cal Poly State University San Luis Obispo  
Monarch Butterfly Fund  
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
New Mexico BioPark Society  
Oregon Zoo  
Organic Consumers Association  
Pennies for Monarchs  
People and Pollinators Action Network  
Pollinator Friendly Alliance  
Pollinator Partnership

Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County  
River Partners  
San Diego Zoo Global  
Slater Museum of Natural History, University of Puget Sound  
The FREED Peoples  
Toxic Free North Carolina  
USA National Phenology Network  
Utah Monarch Advocates  
Valley Improvement Projects (VIP)  
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation