

RCW 43.23.320 Pollinator health task force. (Expires January 1, 2024.) (1) The department shall create and chair a pollinator health task force. The department shall appoint the members of the task force, which must include, but is not limited to, representatives of the following interests, organizations, and state agencies:

- (a) The conservation commission;
 - (b) The department of natural resources;
 - (c) The department of fish and wildlife;
 - (d) The state parks and recreation commission;
 - (e) The Washington state department of transportation;
 - (f) The state noxious weed control board;
 - (g) The tree fruit industry;
 - (h) The seed industry;
 - (i) The berry industry;
 - (j) Other agricultural industries dependent upon pollinators;
 - (k) Washington State University;
 - (l) Pesticide distributors and applicators;
 - (m) Conservation organizations;
 - (n) Organizations representing beekeepers or apiarists;
 - (o) A member of the public from west of the crest of the Cascade mountains; and
 - (p) A member of the public from east of the crest of the Cascade mountains.
- (2) One or more representatives of Washington tribes must also be invited to participate on the task force.
- (3) One youth representative from an organization that encourages students to engage in agricultural education must also be invited to participate on the task force when available.
- (4) The task force shall build upon existing pollinator research and pollinator habitat plans at the national and state level including, but not limited to, the state-managed pollinator plan, to assist with the development of an implementation plan to implement the state pollinator health strategy.
- (5) The task force shall assist, as practicable, with implementation of the recommendations of the task force submitted to the legislature in November 2020.
- (6) The department shall provide the implementation plan to the appropriate committees of the senate and house of representatives by December 31, 2021, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036. The implementation plan must include the task force's evaluation and development of protocols that would increase communications between beekeepers, farmers and growers, and pesticide applicators including, but not limited to, education and outreach to beekeepers, farmers and growers, and pesticide applicators.
- (7) The department shall provide information related to implementation of the state pollinator health strategy and a recommendation of whether to extend the task force beyond January 1, 2024, to the appropriate committees of the senate and house of representatives by December 1, 2022, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036.
- (8) This section expires January 1, 2024. [2021 c 278 § 2.]

Purpose—Intent—2021 c 278: "(1) The purpose of this act is to implement the recommendations of the pollinator health task force created by section 3, chapter 353, Laws of 2019, entitled "Recommendations of the Pollinator Health Task Force - for Pollinator Health in Washington" (November 2020).

(2) The task force provided recommendations to help prioritize and enact policy changes for pollinators in Washington. The recommendations are organized under five broad categories: (a) Habitat; (b) pesticides; (c) education; (d) managed pollinators; and (e) research.

(3) The task force met for the first time the same week that the Asian giant hornet was first discovered in Washington and the week after the Houdini fly was also reported for the first time in Washington. Asian giant hornets primarily hunt honey bees and destroy entire honey bee hives. The Houdini fly threatens native mason bee populations as well as managed mason bees. Washington is home to over 400 different species of native bees, 65 species of butterflies, as well as moths, wasps, beetles, flies, and hummingbirds. The loss of pollinators, managed and unmanaged, can lead to decreased yields of many fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Washington is currently the top producer in the United States of apples, sweet cherries, alfalfa, blueberries, and pears. In Washington state, honey bees and other pollinators are responsible for the production of tree fruits, small fruits, and other crops.

(4) The legislature intends by this act to implement various recommendations from the pollinator health task force to protect and expand the habitat upon which pollinators depend, by providing technical and financial assistance to public and private landowners, and by coordinating with state agencies and local governments in promoting practices to ensure sustainable, healthy populations of managed and native pollinators." [2021 c 278 § 1.]