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**SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1654**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** House General Government & Information Technology (originally sponsored by Representatives Peterson, Lytton, Fitzgibbon, Blake, and Walkinshaw)

AN ACT Relating to controlling noxious weeds while still supporting pollen-rich forage plant communities for honey bees; amending RCW 17.10.145; adding a new section to chapter 43.220 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The state noxious weed control board shall conduct a pilot project that evaluates the advantages of purposefully replacing pollen and nectar-rich noxious weeds, such as knapweeds and nonnative thistles, which are productive forage plants for honey bees, with either native or noninvasive, nonnative forage plants that can produce similar levels of pollen and nectar to support honey bee populations. The pilot project must be developed to maximize the dual public benefits of reducing noxious weeds in Washington and maintaining access to pollen and nectar-rich plants for honey bees and apiarists.

(2) In implementing the pilot project, the state noxious weed control board must coordinate with managers of state or federal public lands, which may include providing plant starts, seed packs, and other goods or services necessary to replace noxious weeds with either native or noninvasive, nonnative plants or to create, in conjunction with noxious weed control efforts, new forage patches for honey bees and other pollinators.

(3) The implementation details of the pilot project required by this section are at the sole discretion of the state noxious weed control board, including the selection of pilot project partners and participants. However, if possible, pilot project partners should be located in both eastern and western Washington.

(4) The state noxious weed control board must issue a report to the legislature, consistent with RCW 43.01.036, that outlines the successes and challenges of the pilot project, including the development of the tools in this subsection. This report must be presented by October 31, 2017, and include:

(a) A description of the following tools:

(i) A list of suitable pollen-rich forage plant alternatives to noxious weeds, taking into account traits such as nectar and pollen quality, bloom succession, growth requirements, and habitat type.

(ii) A list of seed and plant start suppliers that may be able to provide pollen-rich forage plant alternatives to noxious weeds.

(iii) A matrix, based on the pilot project, to provide guidelines to land managers when replacing noxious weeds or creating new pollen-rich forage patches;

(b) An assessment scale that may be used by public land managers and the apiary industry to rate the usefulness of the tools described in this subsection.

(c) Any recommendations for extending the pilot project or using the lessons learned as part of Washington's overall noxious weed control strategy.

(5) This section expires June 30, 2018.

**Sec.**  RCW 17.10.145 and 1997 c 353 s 18 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) All state agencies shall control noxious weeds on lands they own, lease, or otherwise control through integrated pest management practices. Agencies shall develop plans in cooperation with county noxious weed control boards to control noxious weeds in accordance with standards in this chapter.

(2) All state agencies' lands must comply with this chapter, regardless of noxious weed control efforts on adjacent lands.

(3) While conducting planned projects to ensure compliance with this chapter, all agencies must give preference, when deemed appropriate by the acting agency for the project and targeted resource management goals, to replacing pollen-rich or nectar-rich noxious weeds with native forage plants that are beneficial for all pollinators, including honey bees.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.220 RCW to read as follows:

Any corps project that involves the removal of noxious weeds must, when deemed appropriate for the project goals by the project sponsor, include the planting of pollen-rich and nectar-rich native plants to provide forage for all pollinators, including honey bees.

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