

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5934

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Concerning pollinator habitat.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs (originally sponsored by Senators Padden, Van De Wege, Dhingra, Liias, Salomon and Warnick).

**Senate Committee on Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs**  
**House Committee on Local Government**

**Background:** Washington State Department of Agriculture Pollinator Health Program. The Department of Agriculture (WSDA) promotes and protects pollinator habitat and the health and sustainability of pollinator species by providing technical and financial assistance to state agencies, local governments, and private landowners to implement practices promoting habitat for managed pollinators, as well as beekeeper and grower best management practices.

Pollinator Habitat. The Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the Department of Transportation, State Parks, and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board must consider pollinator habitat when managing lands or habitat. WDFW must evaluate various restoration techniques with the goal of improving habitat for native pollinators where practicable when making habitat improvements or for riparian restoration.

If a public works project includes landscaping, at least 25 percent of the planted area must be pollinator habitat to the extent practicable. WSDA, in consultation with the State Conservation Commission (Commission) and WDFW, must develop a list of native forage plants that are pollen-rich or nectar-rich and beneficial for all pollinators, including honey bees.

The Commission provides grant funding to conservation districts to educate residents and community groups in urban, suburban, and rural nonfarm areas about the value of pollinator habitat for both managed and native pollinators. Educational efforts include the benefits of

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habitat diversity, especially pollen-rich and nectar-rich flowering forbs and shrubs.

**Summary:** A city, code city, and county may encourage a project permit applicant or commercial building permit applicant to include pollinator friendly plants in any landscaped area to the extent practicable by:

- providing the list of native forage plants developed by the WSDA;
- providing information regarding the benefits of pollinators and pollinator habitat; and
- offering incentives, including expedited processing or reduced application fees, for permit applicants that include pollinator habitat as part of the permit application.

A city, code city, or county may set restrictions related to beehives, but may not adopt an ordinance banning beehives.

The governing documents for a homeowners association or a common interest community may not prohibit the installation of pollinator habitat, including beehives compliant with local regulation. The governing documents may include reasonable rules regarding the placement and aesthetic appearance of pollinator habitat as long as the rules do not render the use of pollinator habitat unreasonably costly or otherwise effectively infeasible. The provisions related to drought resistant landscaping, pollinator habitat, and wildfire ignition resistant landscaping do not apply to condominium associations.

Pollinator habitat is an area of land that is, or may be, developed as habitat beneficial for the feeding, nesting, and reproduction of all pollinators. Pollinator habitat areas do not include beehives, except for mason bee houses.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	48	1	
House	96	0	(House amended)
Senate	49	0	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** June 6, 2024