

## **19<sup>th</sup> House District**

Parts of NE Franklin County  
Including Columbus, Gahanna,  
New Albany, Westerville, Minerva Park,  
and area townships



## **134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Committees**

Energy and Natural Resources  
Health  
Higher Education and Career Readiness  
Primary & Secondary Education  
Technology and Innovation, Ranking Member

### **Representative Mary Lightbody 19<sup>th</sup> House District**

Testimony to the House Agriculture and Conservation Committee  
Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 649  
provided by Mary Lightbody, Ph.D.  
November 15, 2022

Chairman Koehler, Vice Chair Creech, Ranking Member Brent, and members of the House Agriculture and Conservation Committee, thank you for allowing my joint sponsor, Representative Michael Skindell and me to testify in support of House Bill 649. Designating the last full week of June to honor pollinators would spread awareness about the benefits they provide to our everyday lives.

A pollinator is anything that aids in the movement process of pollen. The movement of pollen is essential for the plant to become fertilized and in turn produce fruits, seeds, and young plants. Birds, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, wasps, bats and small mammals, and, of course, bees are all examples of prominent pollinators found throughout Ohio<sup>1</sup>.

Pollinators play a fundamental role in our lives every single day, not only do they ensure the wellbeing of ecosystems, but we depend on them for to produce food and varied medicinal products. According to the United States Forest Service, more than 150 food crops in the U.S. depend on pollinators, including almost all fruit and grain crops<sup>2</sup>. More than half of the diet of fats and oils come from crops pollinated by animals.<sup>3</sup> Pollinators not only contribute to food, but also our entire economy. In 2012, the economic value of insect pollination totaled \$34 billion<sup>4</sup>.

However, pollinators are constantly exploited and put in danger. In Ohio, with ever expanding human development replacing landscapes and reducing the habitat and food sources pollinators require, and with the continued use of pesticides, pollinators in recent years have been put at greater risk. My colleague Dr. Karen Goodell at OSU Newark has been researching the factors that influence the populations and communities of several pollinator species. She has studied how mine reclamation influences pollinator communities at the Wilds, how crop management practices influence important crop pollinators in pumpkin fields, and how invasive species interact with pollinators across Ohio. She and others are mapping the distribution and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pollinator.org/pollination>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/pollinators/importance.shtml#:~:text=Globally%2C%20pollination%20services%20are%20likely,all%20fruit%20and%20grain%20crops>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.growingagreenerworld.com/the-importance-of-pollinators/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://beta.nsf.gov/news/economic-value-insect-pollination-services-us-much-higher-thought-study-finds>

habitat associations of Ohio's bumble bee and are using conservation practices to help native bees.

It is her work, and that of farmers and scientists across Ohio who understand how important it is to draw attention to the many pollinators which contribute so much to our wellbeing and economy. Many people across Ohio are unaware of the threats to our pollinators; attention provided to the issue through this awareness week in June will help Ohioans employ strategies to protect them, and to appreciate the important work they do.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important piece of legislation. Along with Representative Skindell, I would be happy to answer any questions the committee members may have.