



Governor Mark Dayton
116 Veterans Service Building
20 West 12th Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

May 12, 2017

Re: Pollinator and Pesticide Issues in Agriculture Finance Bill

Dear Governor Dayton,

Thank you for advocating for strong protections for pollinators and Minnesota communities from the harms of pesticide exposures. As you continue negotiations with legislators, we would like to outline our positions on key issues in the agriculture finance bill (S.F. 780/H.F. 895):

- 1) Pollinator Protection Account:** We are disappointed that the pollinator protection account, as proposed by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and included in the original versions of S.F. 780/H.F. 895, is not included in the current bill. The scientific link between pesticide exposure and pollinator decline is abundantly clear. To reduce pollinator exposure to pesticides while keeping crop yields and farm incomes strong, we need further research on pest thresholds for key Minnesota crops, and accompanying integrated pest management (IPM) research on controlling pests while minimizing pesticide use. The pollinator protection account provides the resources for this critical research.

Our position: The pollinator protection account should be fully funded at \$1 million for this biennium. We also support the proposed annual pollinator protection registration application fee, which will contribute to the account.

- 2) Pollinator Habitat and Research Account** (lines 2.33-3.2, 25.3-25.7): We appreciate that legislators have acknowledged the issue of pollinator decline by proposing \$500,000 for the University of Minnesota to study pollinator habitat. This project, however, achieves different objectives than the pollinator protection account.

Our position: We support funding for pollinator habitat research at the University. However, this funding should not replace for the pollinator protection account, which has a different research focus.

- 3) Curtailing MDA Authority Over Pesticide Use** (lines 25.17-25.19, 26.1-26.3, 26.14-26.16): MDA is the only agency with the federally-delegated authority, staffing, and

scientific expertise to ensure that pesticides are used properly in the state of Minnesota. The agriculture finance bill would roll back that authority.

Our position: The legislature should not take preemptive action to limit MDA's authority to make science-based decisions on pesticide use. We encourage MDA to work with stakeholders, including the Governor's Committee on Pollinator Protection, to design a workable and rigorous "verification of need" process that works for farmers and protects pollinators across the state. If this provision remains in this bill or others, we encourage you to veto them.

Respectfully,

Lex Horan
Pesticide Action Network
651.245.1733
lex@panna.org

Erin Rupp
Pollinate Minnesota
612.245.6384
erin@pollinatemn.org

Dan Raichel
NRDC
312.651.7910
draichel@nrdc.org