

**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
On House Bill 2531**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council strongly supports HB 2531.

HB 2531 builds on the pollinator protection efforts established in ORS 634.045. This bill adds a level of cross-agency coordination currently lacking in the pollinator protection program. By adding State Department of Forestry, Department of Transportation and State Department of Fish and Wildlife as consulting agencies for the state's pollinator health outreach and education plan, this bill ensures that the entire range of pollinator threats will be addressed, not just those associated with agricultural production.

In addition, HB 2531 adds a component to the outreach and education plan that identifies best practices for increasing habitat for bees and other pollinators. This is a move for the program - from simply protecting bees and pollinators to actively encouraging population increase.

There are many pressures on bee and pollinator population. By broadening our current protective efforts through interagency coordination and enlarging bee and pollinator habitat through focused educational efforts, we will be addressing two of the most serious threats.

OEC acknowledges the importance of bee and pollinator populations to a strong agricultural sector, healthy urban landscapes, and, functional natural ecosystems across the state. We support HB 2531.