SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 139

Senators Outman and Geiss offered the following resolution:

A resolution to urge the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to take a balanced approach to protecting Michigan’s pollinator populations while responsibly managing invasive spotted knapweed.

Whereas, Pollinators, including honeybees and native bees, are essential to Michigan's agricultural economy and natural ecosystems, contributing to the production of fruits, vegetables, seed crops, and countless flowering plants; and

Whereas, Michigan's beekeepers provide critical pollination services that support agricultural production throughout the state while also producing honey and other valuable products; and

Whereas, Honeybee-pollinated crops contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to Michigan's economy and support thousands of jobs across the state's agricultural sector; and

Whereas, Spotted knapweed has become an important late-season nectar source for managed honeybees because relatively few other plants bloom during late summer and early fall in Michigan; and

Whereas, Income generated from late-season honey production helps offset the costs of providing commercial pollination services to Michigan fruit and vegetable growers; and

Whereas, The continued health of Michigan's pollinator populations directly affects the productivity of orchards, berry farms, vegetable producers, and many other agricultural operations throughout the state; and

Whereas, Spotted knapweed is also recognized as an invasive species that can negatively affect native ecosystems, grasslands, wildlife habitat, and land management objectives when left uncontrolled; and

Whereas, Biological control methods, including the use of approved weevil species, have been employed to reduce spotted knapweed populations while minimizing reliance on chemical control methods; and

Whereas, Public policy should strive to balance invasive species management with the protection of pollinator habitat and the economic sustainability of Michigan's beekeeping and agricultural industries; and

Whereas, Collaboration among beekeepers, conservation organizations, agricultural producers, universities, and state and federal agencies can help identify management strategies that both suppress invasive species and preserve adequate forage resources for pollinators; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative body recognize the importance of protecting Michigan's pollinator

populations while continuing responsible efforts to manage invasive species through sound science and stakeholder collaboration; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the United States Department of Agriculture, researchers, conservation organizations, and representatives of Michigan's beekeeping and agricultural industries to carefully evaluate the potential impacts of future biological control actions on pollinator forage before authorizing additional releases or expanding existing programs; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage the development of balanced, science-based management strategies that preserve healthy pollinator habitat, support Michigan's agricultural economy, and effectively address the ecological challenges posed by invasive spotted knapweed; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture.