

Pilot Program to Replace Noxious Weeds for Noninvasive Forage Plants

Rep. Jeff Reardon: HB 2535



- Noxious weeds are often good for supplying pollen and nectar to pollinators, but the detrimental impacts of these invasive plants often outweigh their value as a pollen and nectar source.
- I'm introducing a bill that creates a 4-year pilot program that would replace noxious weeds with noninvasive forage plants that offer similar benefits to pollinators.
- This bill would require the State Department of Agriculture to conduct a four-year pilot program for replacing noxious weeds that supply pollen and nectar to pollinating insects with noninvasive forage plants offering similar benefits for pollinating insects.
- The State Weed Board in consultation with the department shall identify noxious weeds that are widely distributed throughout the state and identify noninvasive forage plants capable of replacing noxious weeds.
- The department shall encourage, but may not require, participation in the pilot program by owners and occupants of public and private lands infested with noxious weeds within the test areas.

The department shall survey owners and occupants of public and private lands to determine:

- A. The best choices for noninvasive forage plants for various pollinating insects;
 - B. Best practices for promoting the successful growth of noninvasive forage plants;
 - C. The comparative effect on pollinating insect populations of pilot program activities (including at critical times of the beekeeping cycle), and traditional noxious weed control; and;
 - D. Any other information the department deems beneficial for accessing the effect of the pilot program.
- The pilot program will consult and cooperate with the Oregon State University Extension Service, weed control districts, and owners and occupiers of private and public lands where noxious weeds prevail.
 - The department will report their findings to the interim committee of natural resources no later than September 15, 2022.
 - The pollinator forage pilot fund is established separate and distinct from the noxious weed grant program and shall consist of moneys appropriated by the legislative assembly. The department