

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2016 SESSION

CHAPTER 11

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 1 of Title 3.2 a section numbered 3.2-108.1, relating to Virginia Pollinator Protection Strategy.

[S 356]

Approved February 23, 2016

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 1 of Title 3.2 a section numbered 3.2-108.1 as follows:

§ 3.2-108.1. Virginia Pollinator Protection Strategy.

A. The Department shall develop and maintain a Virginia Pollinator Protection Strategy (the Strategy) to (i) promote the health of and mitigate the risks to all pollinator species and (ii) ensure a robust agriculture economy and apiary industry for honeybees and other managed pollinators.

B. In developing the Strategy, the Department shall seek the assistance of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and the Department of Environmental Quality and shall establish a stakeholder group composed of representatives of affected groups, including beekeepers, agricultural producers, commercial pesticide applicators, private pesticide applicators, pesticide manufacturers, retailers, lawn and turf service providers, agribusiness and farmer organizations, conservation interests, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the Virginia Cooperative Extension.

C. The Strategy shall include a plan for the protection of managed pollinators that provides voluntary best management practices for pesticide users, beekeepers, and landowners and agricultural producers. The protection plan shall support:

- 1. Communication between beekeepers and applicators;*
 - 2. Reduction of the risk to pollinators from pesticides;*
 - 3. Increases in pollinator habitat;*
 - 4. Maintenance of existing compliance with state pesticide use requirements;*
 - 5. Identification of needs for further research to promote robust agriculture and apiary industries;*
- and*
- 6. Identification of additional opportunities for education and outreach on pollinators.*

2. That the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall, no later than July 1, 2017, provide an interim report on the Virginia Pollinator Protection Strategy (the Strategy) to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources, the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources, and the Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services (the Board) and shall, upon completion of the Strategy but not later than July 1, 2018, report on the Strategy to those committees and the Board.