

HB 1258

The Bee Bill

Good morning Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Beltz and agriculture committee members.

For the record, I'm Representative Liz Conmy from South Fargo's District 11.

I come to you this morning as both a legislator and a farmer to present HB 1258.

This bill seeks to do a complete overview of native pollinator insect health in the state.

Why does this matter?

We rely on insects to pollinate our crops, gardens, fruits, and flowers. Where I farm, we need insects to pollinate soybeans, canola and alfalfa. Pollinators are an integral part of our ecosystem and there is concern that they may be threatened or in decline. We are also the leading state in honey production—and bees are a major pollinator population.

Under the auspices of our agriculture commissioner, this bill would:

1. Identify challenges with native pollinating insects, including their decline
2. It would identify native pollinator insect communities and their significance to our ecosystems, examine the current knowledge of pollinator health, look at existing gaps in research, including wild bee distribution and populations, and identify best management practices.
3. This "meta-analysis" would be complete by June of 2026, and include recommendations on developing an education and outreach component for public awareness, a plan to engage and work across state agencies with policies and practices regarding native pollinating insects, and identify how to best protect our native pollinating insects.
4. This study will include federal agencies, independent research by experts in pollinator health, and work from our own state agencies regarding native pollinating insects.

We are asking for a sum of \$25,000 to complete this project.

Native pollinating insect communities are an incredibly important ecosystem and part of our ag economy. I encourage you to seriously consider this study and vote yes to pass it out of committee.

I'm happy to take any any questions, although I think other's testimony will probably answer your questions more accurately.

Thank you.