



Legislation Text

File #: 71271, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

No fiscal impact.

Title

Proclaiming May 2022 to be "Low" Mow May and Promoting Pollinator-Friendly Lawn Height Year-Round

Body

WHEREAS, three-fourths of the world's flowering plants and about 35 percent of the world's food crops depend on animal pollinators like bees, butterflies and moths, birds and bats, and beetles and other insects to reproduce; and,

WHEREAS, U.S. National Agricultural Statistics show a honey bee decline from about 6 million hives in 1947 to 2.4 million hives in 2008, a 60 percent reduction; and,

WHEREAS, top reasons for pollinator population decline include habitat loss, climate change, and the harmful usage of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers; and,

WHEREAS, in 2020, the City of Appleton became the first city in the U.S. to adopt "No-Mow May," an initiative designed to boost the population of bees and other pollinators; and,

WHEREAS, No-Mow May is a conservation initiative that encourages people to stop mowing for the month of May in order to create habitat and provide resources for bees and other pollinators as they come out of hibernation; and,

WHEREAS, other cities in Wisconsin have since followed Appleton to adopt No-Mow May including: Village of Shorewood Hills, Monona, Middleton, Sun Prairie, Wausau, Oshkosh, Fort Atkinson and Stevens Point, De Pere, Wisconsin Rapids, La Crosse; and,

WHEREAS, in 2015, the City of Madison adopted the recommendations put forth through the Pollinator Protection Task Force Final Report; and,

WHEREAS, in 2017, the City of Madison become a certified Bee City per the requirements outlined by BEE CITY USA® (RES-17-00301); and,

WHEREAS, in 2022, the City of Madison reaffirmed its commitment to supporting pollinator health and authorizing the City of Madison to take the Mayors Monarch Pledge (RES-22-00300); and,

WHEREAS, research has found that grass heights of ~12.5 cm / 5 inches, which equated to mowing roughly every two weeks, supported the highest abundances of bees, and the abundance was related to the amount of lawn flowers present (e.g., dandelions, clover, violets); and,

WHEREAS, per Madison General Ordinance (M.G.O.) Sec. 27.05(2)(f), grass is required to be mowed to a height not to exceed 8";

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Madison adopt a "Low" Mow May for the month of May that recommends:

- Reducing frequency of mowing to once during the month of May instead of every 7-10 days, or
- Raising mower height to 4" from a more typical 2"-3"

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in addition other recommendations to consider include Buffer Zones, Native Plantings, and Permanent Conservation year-round.

Sources:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/plantsanimals/pollinate/>
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0004071>
<https://beecityusa.org/no-mow-may-qa/>
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