

.....  
(Original Signature of Member)

112TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend title 23, United States Code, to encourage and facilitate efforts by States and other transportation right-of-way managers to adopt integrated vegetation management practices, including enhancing plantings of native forbs and grasses that provide habitats for pollinators, and for other purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To amend title 23, United States Code, to encourage and facilitate efforts by States and other transportation right-of-way managers to adopt integrated vegetation management practices, including enhancing plantings of native forbs and grasses that provide habitats for pollinators, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Highways Bettering  
3 the Economy and Environment Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) The roadside vegetation management prac-  
7 tices of both State governments and the Federal  
8 Government aim to secure motorist safety, reduce  
9 the presence of noxious weeds, and stabilize the soil.

10 (2) Federal and State highway departments are  
11 facing severe budget shortfalls.

12 (3) Native forbs and grasses are less likely to  
13 encroach onto roads than invasive species, such as  
14 kudzu.

15 (4) Integrated vegetation management practices  
16 will reduce the cost of maintaining roadside vegeta-  
17 tion.

18 (5) Native forbs and grasses are best adapted  
19 to local conditions and thus require less active man-  
20 agement, reducing the need to replant, weed, and  
21 mow the areas adjacent to the road.

22 (6) Pollinators, such as bees, birds, bats, and  
23 butterflies, are suffering drastic population loss, due  
24 in part to loss of habitat.

25 (7) Pollinators are vital for American agri-  
26 culture. Responsible for 1 out of every 3 bites of

1 food we eat, a diverse pollinator population is nec-  
2 essary for maintaining the diversity of our plant life  
3 and food supply.

4 (8) Studies have shown supporting native forbs  
5 and grasses along the roadside can be beneficial to  
6 the pollinator population by providing migratory cor-  
7 ridors and habitat connectivity and by helping such  
8 populations adapt to climate change.

9 (9) Enhancing pollinator populations on rights-  
10 of-way can result in improved pollination services for  
11 neighboring lands, including agriculture and wildlife  
12 ecosystems.

13 (10) Highway rights-of-way managed by States  
14 represent 17 million acres of pollinator habitat con-  
15 servation opportunity, and similar opportunities and  
16 benefits exist on other transportation rights-of-way.

17 **SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS TO ENCOURAGE**  
18 **POLLINATOR HABITAT ON TRANSPORTATION**  
19 **RIGHTS-OF-WAY.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 319 of title 23, United  
21 States Code, is amended—

22 (1) in subsection (a) by striking “beauty adja-  
23 cent” and inserting “beauty (including the enhance-  
24 ment of habitat for pollinators) adjacent”; and

25 (2) by adding at the end the following:

1           “(c) ENCOURAGEMENT OF POLLINATOR HABITAT  
2 DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION ON TRANSPORTATION  
3 RIGHTS-OF-WAY.—In carrying out any program adminis-  
4 tered by the Secretary, the Secretary shall, in conjunction  
5 with the States, as appropriate—

6           “(1) conduct or encourage integrated vegetation  
7 management practices on roadsides and other trans-  
8 portation rights-of-way, including reduced mowing;

9           “(2) enhance the development of habitat for  
10 pollinators through plantings of native forbs and  
11 grasses;

12           “(3) encourage leveraging through partnerships  
13 and coordination with stakeholders in support of pol-  
14 linators and plantings of native forbs and grasses,  
15 such as environmental groups, research institutions,  
16 other agencies, businesses, and community organiza-  
17 tions; and

18           “(4) conduct or facilitate research and dem-  
19 onstration projects on the economic and environ-  
20 mental benefits and best practices for integrated  
21 vegetation management, reduced mowing, and plant-  
22 ings of native forbs and grasses for pollinator habi-  
23 tat.”.

1 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the  
2 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transpor-  
3 tation shall transmit to Congress a report that includes—

4 (1) an analysis of current programs and au-  
5 thorities available to carry out section 319(c) of title  
6 23, United States Code;

7 (2) a summary of programs and authorities  
8 being used to implement such section;

9 (3) an assessment of actions being taken by  
10 State transportation departments and other man-  
11 agers of transportation rights-of-way to implement  
12 integrated vegetation management practices, reduce  
13 mowing, and enhance habitat for pollinators through  
14 plantings of native forbs and grasses, and

15 (4) any recommendations for further action.

16 **SEC. 4. PROVISION OF HABITAT FOR POLLINATORS.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 329(a)(1) of title 23,  
18 United States Code, is amended by inserting “provision  
19 of habitat for pollinators,” before “and aesthetic enhance-  
20 ment”.