WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management is invested with the power and duty to supervise and control the protection, development, planning and utilization of the natural resources of the state, including insects, and to promote agriculture in the state, and to regulate the registration and application of pesticides in the state; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, the House of Representatives created the Pollinator Working Group to work with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management on maintaining, protecting and enhancing pollinator habitat and health in Rhode Island; and

WHEREAS, Pollinators including bees provide invaluable ecosystems services that are crucial to wellbeing in the state; and

WHEREAS, Populations of pollinators including bees have been subject to stress and impairment in the United States and elsewhere to the extent that pollinator habitat and health have become matters of reasonable, significant public and environmental concern; and

WHEREAS, The causes of this stress and impairment may be multiple and are the subject of active, on-going studies that can yield advances in understanding of how to improve conditions and practices affecting pollinator habitat and health; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island currently lacks a systematic and comprehensive assessment of such studies and advances in understanding and how they might be applied to the benefit of Rhode Island; and
WHEREAS, The Pollinator Working Group reported to the Legislature and Governor on
February 15, 2017, on:

(1) Developments in the scientific and technical understanding of conditions and
practices affecting pollinator populations;

(2) Conditions and practices affecting the maintenance, protection, and enhancement of
pollinator habitat and health in Rhode Island; and

(3) Potential costs and benefits of changing such conditions and practices; and

WHEREAS, The Pollinator Working Group made recommendations, based on its
findings, to maintain, protect, and enhance pollinator health and habitat in Rhode Island; now,
therefore be it;

RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State Rhode Island and
Providence Plantations hereby respectfully requests the Director of the Department of
Environmental Management to continue working with the Pollinator Working Group which shall
be comprised of not less than seven nor more than eleven members, and shall include a
representative of the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association and the Audubon Society
of Rhode Island, and between five and nine members appointed by the Director, not more than
one of whom may be a representative of the Department, and which appointments shall be made
with the purpose of providing for fair balance and representation of interests concerned with the
issues to be considered by the working group; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this House hereby requests that the working group be charged with
providing policy recommendations and implementation strategies to the Department of
Environmental Management, Department of Transportation and other state agencies working on
pollinator protection and health; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this House hereby requests that the Working Group shall:

(a) Make findings with regard to:

(1) Developments in the scientific and technical understanding of conditions and
practices affecting pollinator populations;

(2) Conditions and practices affecting the maintenance, protection, and enhancement of
pollinator habitat and health in Rhode Island;

(3) Opportunities for expanding pollinator habitat on state owned property;

(4) Rhode Island’s pesticide and apiary laws and regulations and training;

(5) Strategies to publicize and coordinate public education programs directed at pollinator
health and habitat;

(6) Strategies to fund pollinator monitoring and habitat enhancement; and
(b) Make recommendations, based on its findings, to maintain, protect, and enhance pollinator health and habitat in Rhode Island; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this House hereby requests that the Director shall designate one member of the working group to be its coordinator/presiding officer and the meetings of the working group shall be open to the public and shall be posted by the Department in accordance with the Open Meetings Law; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this House hereby respectfully requests the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island in collaboration with other members of the working group, to provide such administrative, staff and logistical support as the working group may require; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this House hereby respectfully requests that the working group provides a written report of its year two findings and recommendations to the Director and to the House of Representatives on or before February 15, 2018; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.