WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) is vested 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 (PWG) to work with RIDEM 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, Rhode Island’s state-owned properties, including state roads managed by the
Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and state parks and forests managed by
RIDEM provide opportunities for enhancing habitat for pollinators; and

WHEREAS, The PWG reported to the Legislature and Governor on February 15, 2017,
and on February 15, 2018 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 PWG 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 RIDEM to continue working
with the PWG until March of 2021. The PWG shall be comprised of not less than seven (7) nor
more than eleven (11) members, and shall include a representative of the Rhode Island Nursery
and Landscape Association and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, and between five (5) and
nine (9) members appointed by the Director of RIDEM, 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 RIDEM, RIDOT, and other
state agencies working on pollinator protection and health; and be it further
RESOLVED, That this House hereby requests that the PWG 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 of RIDEM shall designate one member of the PWG to be its coordinator/presiding officer and the meetings of the working group shall be open to the public and shall be posted by RIDEM 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 annual findings, progress, and recommendations to the Director of RIDEM and to the House of Representatives on or before February 15, of each year; 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.