

By: Zaffirini, Powell

S.B. No. 1772

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Texas Pollinator-Smart program for solar energy sites.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. The heading to Subchapter K, Chapter 88, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER K. TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION [~~SERVICE~~]

SECTION 2. Section 88.821, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 88.821. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "AgriLife Extension" or "extension service" means [~~the~~] Texas A&M AgriLife Extension [~~Service~~].

SECTION 3. Subchapter K, Chapter 88, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 88.824 to read as follows:

Sec. 88.824. TEXAS POLLINATOR-SMART PROGRAM. (a) AgriLife Extension shall establish and implement the Texas Pollinator-Smart program to encourage the voluntary establishment and conservation of habitats for bees, birds, and other pollinators in and near solar energy sites.

(b) AgriLife Extension shall develop educational materials for the program that include information regarding:

(1) benefits to solar energy producers, neighboring landowners, agricultural producers, and the environment of providing pollinator habitats at solar energy sites;

1           (2) resources and practices for establishing and  
2 maintaining pollinator habitats;

3           (3) native plant species compatible with solar energy  
4 sites that provide habitat for pollinators;

5           (4) methods to prevent, identify, and eradicate  
6 invasive species without causing harm to pollinators;

7           (5) any available grants or other financial incentives  
8 for establishing or maintaining pollinator habitats;

9           (6) examples of pollinator habitats established at  
10 solar energy sites in this state or other locations; and

11           (7) the Texas Pollinator-Smart scorecard and  
12 certificate under Subsection (c).

13           (c) AgriLife Extension shall:

14           (1) develop a Texas Pollinator-Smart scorecard with  
15 criteria to evaluate and score pollinator habitats at solar energy  
16 sites in this state; and

17           (2) award the Texas Pollinator-Smart certificate to  
18 solar energy sites with pollinator habitats that meet or achieve a  
19 score determined by AgriLife Extension.

20           (d) AgriLife Extension may provide advice and technical  
21 assistance to participants and potential participants in the Texas  
22 Pollinator-Smart program, including reports evaluating the  
23 suitability of solar energy sites.

24           (e) Participation in the Texas Pollinator-Smart program by  
25 a solar energy site is voluntary.

26           SECTION 4. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is required to  
27 implement a provision of this Act only if the legislature

1 appropriates money specifically for that purpose. If the  
2 legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that  
3 purpose, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension may, but is not required to,  
4 implement a provision of this Act using other appropriations  
5 available for that purpose.

6 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.