

By: Zaffirini

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. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.