

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 102

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 19, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator RICHARD J. CODEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Senator CHRISTOPHER "KIP" BATEMAN

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Urges U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list monarch butterfly as threatened species.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/4/2021)

SR102 CODEY, BATEMAN

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- 1 **A SENATE RESOLUTION** urging the United States Fish and Wildlife
2 Service to list the monarch butterfly as a threatened species.
3
- 4 **WHEREAS**, The monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is an iconic
5 large orange and black butterfly that is one of the most familiar
6 butterflies in North America; and
- 7 **WHEREAS**, Every autumn, millions of monarch butterflies undertake a
8 spectacular multi-generational migration thousands of miles from
9 Canada and the northern United States to Mexico and California,
10 stopping along the way in places like New Jersey, to feed and
11 reproduce; and
- 12 **WHEREAS**, Monarch butterfly populations in North America represent
13 the vast majority of all monarch butterflies in the world; and
- 14 **WHEREAS**, Monarch butterfly habitat has been drastically reduced and
15 degraded throughout the butterfly’s summer and winter ranges by
16 the decline of nectar sources, commercial development, logging,
17 and broader environmental changes; and
- 18 **WHEREAS**, One of the major reasons for monarch butterfly population
19 decline is the increased use of pesticides that kill milkweed, the
20 monarch butterfly’s preferred plant host; and
- 21 **WHEREAS**, Climate change also poses a dire threat to the monarch
22 butterfly, as several scientists have predicted that the monarch
23 butterfly’s overwintering habitat in Mexico may be rendered
24 unsuitable by global climate change, and that much of the monarch
25 butterfly’s summer range may also become unsuitable due to
26 increasing temperatures; and
- 27 **WHEREAS**, Disease and predation also contribute to population decline
28 and major threats facing the monarch butterfly include numerous
29 pathogens, such as viruses, bacteria, and protozoan parasites; and
- 30 **WHEREAS**, The monarch butterfly population has declined by more
31 than 90 percent in the past two decades, and is presently near the
32 lowest population ever recorded; and
- 33 **WHEREAS**, The federal “Endangered Species Act” (16 U.S.C. s.1531
34 et seq.) allows a species to be listed as “threatened” when it is at
35 risk of becoming endangered in a significant portion of its range;
36 and
- 37 **WHEREAS**, Although there are small populations of monarch
38 butterflies throughout the world, the North American monarch
39 butterfly population is significant because without it, the
40 redundancy, resiliency, and representation of the species would be
41 so impaired that the monarch butterfly would become increasingly
42 vulnerable to extinction; and
- 43 **WHEREAS**, Numerous other species have been protected under the
44 federal Endangered Species Act that have large ranges and
45 relatively abundant population sizes but have experienced
46 precipitous population decline and face significant threats to their
47 continued existence, such as the gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*),

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1 Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), and piping plover (*Charadrius*
2 *melodus*); and

3 **WHEREAS**, In 2014, a group of conservationists, including the Center
4 for Biological Diversity, the Center for Food Safety, and the Xerces
5 Society, petitioned the Secretary of the United States Department of
6 the Interior, through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, to
7 protect the monarch butterfly under the federal Endangered Species
8 Act; and

9 **WHEREAS**, Based on information in that petition, the U.S. Fish and
10 Wildlife Service determined that the monarch butterfly population
11 may warrant federal protection, and began the process of
12 conducting a thorough assessment to determine if the monarch
13 butterfly should be listed as a threatened species; and

14 **WHEREAS**, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is presently developing
15 a database to capture new, ongoing, and planned conservation
16 efforts for the monarch butterfly, including the enhancement of
17 blooming nectar plant habitats, and to help the agency and its
18 conservation partners assess conditions for the monarch butterfly
19 now and into the future; and

20 **WHEREAS**, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service anticipates making a
21 listing decision concerning the monarch butterfly in June 2019; and

22 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey has long supported the preservation of the
23 monarch butterfly, and in 2017, passed two separate pieces of
24 legislation helping to protect the species: the “Adopt a Monarch
25 Butterfly Waystation Act,” P.L.2017, c.250 (C.13:1B-15.162 et
26 seq.), and the “Milkweed for Monarchs Act,” P.L.2017, c.252
27 (C.13:1B-15.170 et seq.); and

28 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey values the important role that pollinators, such
29 as the monarch butterfly, play in the ecology of the State and the
30 nation, and there is bi-partisan support in New Jersey for programs
31 and legislation that protect and encourage pollinators and the
32 habitats that support them; now, therefore,

33

34 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:*

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36 1. This House urges the United States Fish and Wildlife
37 Service to list the monarch butterfly as a threatened species under
38 the federal Endangered Species Act.

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40 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
41 shall be transmitted by Secretary of the Senate to the Governor of
42 the State of New Jersey, to the President of the United States, the
43 Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, the
44 Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in the
45 United States Department of the Interior, every member of
46 Congress elected from the State of New Jersey, the Governor of
47 New Jersey, and the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department
48 of Environmental Protection.

STATEMENT

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This resolution urges the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to list the monarch butterfly as a threatened species.

The monarch butterfly is an iconic large orange and black butterfly that is one of the most familiar butterflies in North America. Every autumn, millions of monarch butterflies undertake a spectacular multi-generational migration thousands of miles from Canada and the northern United States to Mexico and California, stopping along the way in places like New Jersey, to feed and reproduce. Monarch butterfly populations in North America represent the vast majority of all monarch butterflies in the world; however, its habitat has been drastically reduced and degraded by the decline of nectar sources, commercial development, logging, and broader environmental changes.

One of the major reasons for monarch butterfly population decline is the increased use of pesticides that kill milkweed, the monarch butterfly's preferred plant host. Climate change also poses a dire threat to the monarch butterfly, as several scientists have predicted that the monarch butterfly's overwintering habitat in Mexico may be rendered unsuitable by global climate change, and that much of the monarch butterfly's summer range may also become unsuitable due to increasing temperatures. Disease and predation also contribute to population declines and major threats facing the monarch butterfly include numerous pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, and protozoan parasites. The monarch butterfly population has declined by more than 90 percent in the past two decades, and is presently near the lowest population ever recorded.

The federal "Endangered Species Act" allows a species to be listed as "threatened" when it is at risk of becoming endangered in a significant portion of its range. Although there are small populations of monarch butterflies throughout the world, the North American monarch butterfly population is significant because without it, the redundancy, resiliency, and representation of the species would be so impaired that the monarch butterfly would become increasingly vulnerable to extinction.

In 2014, a group of conservationists, including the Center for Biological Diversity, the Center for Food Safety, and the Xerces Society, petitioned the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to protect the monarch butterfly under the federal Endangered Species Act. Based on information in that petition, the USFWS determined that the monarch butterfly population may warrant federal protection, and began the process of conducting a thorough assessment to determine if the monarch butterfly should be listed as a threatened species. The USFWS is presently developing a database to capture new, ongoing, and planned conservation efforts for the monarch butterfly, including the

1 enhancement of blooming nectar plant habitats, and to help the
2 agency and its conservation partners assess conditions for the
3 monarch butterfly now and into the future.

4 The USFWS anticipates making a listing decision concerning the
5 monarch butterfly in June 2019. New Jersey has long supported the
6 preservation of the monarch butterfly, and in 2017, passed two
7 separate pieces of legislation helping to protect the species: the
8 “Adopt a Monarch Butterfly Waystation Act” and the “Milkweed
9 for Monarchs Act.” New Jersey values the important role that
10 pollinators, such as the monarch butterfly, play in the ecology of the
11 State and the nation, and there is bi-partisan support in New Jersey
12 for programs and legislation that protect and encourage pollinators
13 and the habitats that support them.