



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Deb Andraca
23RD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

BAYSIDE BROWN DEER FOX POINT MEQUON RIVER HILLS THIENSVILLE WHITEFISH BAY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Capitol Abuzz as Rep. Deb Andraca Introduces Pollinator Week Legislation
New Bill Would Name Endangered Rusty Patched Bumble Bee as State Native Insect

Madison, Wis. – Representative Deb Andraca’s office called on fellow pollen-ticians to join in a sweet opportunity to bring attention to the endangered **Rusty Patched Bumble Bee**. The bill, part of a pollinator package led by Representative Lee Snodgrass, would designate the Rusty Patched as Wisconsin’s official state *native* insect alongside our current state insect, the honey bee.

The Rusty Patched Bumble Bee (*Bombus affinis*) is a Federally Endangered and Wisconsin Special Concern Species. Prior to its 2017 designation as endangered, the species experienced a rapid decline, possibly due to a pathogen and pesticide exposure. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, along with other partners, have created a [recovery plan](#) to conserve the species and enable it to recover from this sticky situation.

This wonderful and hard-working pollinator is one of the first species to emerge in early spring, and one of the last to go into hibernation in the fall. The Rusty Patched Bumble Bee gathers pollen and nectar from a wide variety of Wisconsin’s flowering plants throughout the growing season.

“The loss of this bee would sting,” said Rep. Andraca. “Designating the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee as the state native insect would raise awareness of its plight across the state. This is not a red issue or a blue issue – it’s black and yellow, with a patch of rusty hairs on its abdomen. Bumble bees are essential pollinators for some of Wisconsin’s most important crops. Wisconsin is one of the few places left where you can still find the Rusty Patched, so it’s up to us to take action. This IS plan bee.”

While our statement is playful, our admiration for the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee and our concern for its future are serious. More information about the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee is available at the websites of the [DNR](#) and the [US Fish and Wildlife Service](#).

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