Supplemental Project Notice

BEE BETTER CERTIFIED ELECTRIC CALIBRATION

Screening Tool, Gap Analysis, Tiers, Implementation Guide, and Site-Specific Evaluations

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Develop a screening tool and gap analysis framework** to assess the suitability of specific sites for pollinator habitat and possible certification.
- **Calibrate the criteria** based on data and experiences from operating energy sites.
- **Consider certification tiers** that can enable companies to make reliable claims, thus encouraging habitat establishment.
- **Develop guides** for meeting the criteria and applying for certification.
- **Engage third-party verifiers** to define verifier qualifications, a vegetation monitoring protocol that will be used, and test verification processes.
- **Identify synergies** across company pollinator/biodiversity commitments.
- **Inform national discussions** about what qualifies as "pollinator-friendly" energy sites and the associated tradeoffs, if any.

Background, Objectives, and New Learnings

Concern for declining pollinator populations has spurred interest in conservation actions that can support the recovery of bees, butterflies, and moths that provide essential pollination services. Simultaneously, there is increasing demand for electricity while meeting carbon targets. Meeting climate, pollinator, and energy needs at the same time has raised interest in co-locating pollinator habitat with energy infrastructure and has led to varied approaches to defining "pollinator-friendly" energy sites.

In response to power company interest, EPRI launched a research project with The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation (Xerces) in 2021 to develop a nationally recognized, third-party verified, voluntary pollinator certification program for electric power companies: Bee Better Certified Electric. Pilot Test Criteria were developed over multiple years, balancing input from diverse stakeholders and published in the report *Bee Better Certified Electric: Launching Pilot Testing (EPRI Report 3002030789)*. The criteria describe measurable and verifiable elements related to the long-term stewardship of pollinators. Backed by more than 140 citations, the criteria establish a starting point for a clear approach that stakeholders can have confidence in for sites that carry pollinator-friendly labels.

As a next step, the pilot test criteria need to be calibrated with data and experiences from operating energy sites throughout the United States. Likewise, analysis tools are needed to assess the suitability of sites for pollinator habitat. It is important to consider the unique realities of various land asset types, including rights-of-way, small-scale solar, large-scale solar, substations, and power plants. Of particular importance is reality-checking the criteria against solar sites that are helping meet our national carbon reduction targets. Anticipated outcomes from this project include insights into the specific site conditions where co-locating pollinator habitat is realistic while still meeting our clean energy goals.

This project enables companies to test the viability of their entire land asset fleet for pollinator habitat.

Project Approach

Screening Tool: A screening tool will be created to assist companies in self-evaluating the appropriateness of sites for pollinator habitat.

Gap Analysis Framework: Drawing on pilot test criteria and implementation considerations, a framework will be developed to identify gaps for a site to be certified.

Tiers: The project will consider a tiered approach to certification and public claims that balances ecological and operational realities, defines the criteria at each level, and describes the science and logic.

Site-Specific Evaluations: Funders electing to be host sites will help test applicability of the certification criteria on energy properties. EPRI seeks hosts across different regions including solar, transmission, substation, and power plant sites.

Implementation Guides: Leveraging lessons learned from the site-specific evaluations, implementation guides will be developed to help companies support pollinator habitat at energy sites and be certified, if appropriate.

Third-party verifiers: Define verifier qualifications, test verification processes, and develop methods for site audits that will be used by the third-party verifiers.

Identify Synergies: Explore synergies with related programs to reduce overall burden for companies participating in multiple voluntary biodiversity efforts.

Deliverables

Anticipated deliverables, subject to available funding:

Year 1:

1. Screening Tool for Co-locating Pollinator Habitat
2. Third party verifier qualifications and processes
3. EPRI report of site-specific evaluation results from host sites, with insights into creating tiers for certification.
4. Quarterly virtual workgroups with all funders
5. Team site visit, including third-party verifier, data collection, data analysis (Host Sites Only).

Year 2:

1. Implementation guides
2. Gap Analysis Framework
3. Synergies Analysis
4. EPRI report and/or peer-reviewed paper with overall findings, including consideration for when certification is realistic and the potential tradeoffs (if any) for co-locating pollinator habitat with energy infrastructure.
5. Quarterly virtual workgroups with all funders.
6. Bee Better Certification or Gap analysis report (Host Sites Only).

Price of Project

There are two participation levels, as follows:

Host Sites: $45,000 (< 10 acres) or $60,000 (> 10 acres) per site. Funders to provide site access, participate in data collection and analysis. Includes third-party verifier site visit. Host sites could be the first to be certified under the Xerces Bee Better Certified Electric program. Sites that cannot be certified will receive a site-specific Gap Analysis Report.

General Participant: $30,000. Ensures participation in work product development, research updates, and final deliverables (excluding Host Site Only deliverables).

501(c)(3) nonprofit price is available for General Participant level: $10,000.

EPRI Power-in-Pollinators Initiative Funders will have access to brief project updates and the Screening Tool as shared deliverables. EPRI will accept site data from non-funders subject to minimum quality requirements.

Funding can be split over two calendar years. Project is eligible for EPRI member self-directed funds.

Project Status and Schedule

The project is expected to commence in Q1 2025 when a minimum of 5 hosts and 5 General Participants have joined. The project will last for 24 months.

Contact Information

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