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Latest News from the Associated Press

Feb 24, 8:45 PM EST

Oregon Legislature passes bill to protect bees

SALEM, Ore. (AP) -- Oregon lawmakers will not restrict pesticides suspected of causing bumblebee die-offs in Wilsonville and Hillsboro last summer.

However, the Senate did pass a bill Monday requiring more education for licensed pesticide applicators using the chemicals and creating a task force focused on protecting bee health.

The bill directs Oregon State University and the state Department of Agriculture to develop the educational materials pesticides and ways to protect bee populations.

It also establishes a panel to study additional bee-protection measures the Legislature could take up next year.

An earlier version of the bill would have restricted the use of certain pesticides blamed for the bee deaths, but that version failed to clear a House committee earlier this month.

The measure goes next to the governor.

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