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## More than 100 U.S. Mayors Pledge to Help Save the Imperiled Monarch Butterfly

*Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges Make the Twin Cities the 100<sup>th</sup> to Take NWF's Mayors' Monarch Pledge*

March 30, 2016 – Saint Paul, Minn. Mayor Chris Coleman and Minneapolis, Minn. Mayor Betsy Hodges have joined forces to take the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge, making the Twin Cities the 100<sup>th</sup> locale nationwide to take the [Mayors' Monarch Pledge](#), a national campaign working with mayors and local government chief executives to help save the declining monarch butterfly.

"From San Antonio to the Twin Cities—and everywhere in between—our nation's cities are stepping up to save the monarch," said [Collin O'Mara](#), president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. "By working together up and down the critical central monarch flyway, we will ensure that every American child has a chance to experience majestic monarchs in their backyards and communities."

Through the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge, cities and municipalities commit to create habitat and educate citizens on the ways they can make a difference at home or in their community. Mayors who take the pledge commit to at least three of 25 action items to help save the monarch butterfly. These actions can include creating a monarch-friendly demonstration garden at city hall, converting abandoned lots to monarch habitat, changing mowing schedules to allow milkweed to grow unimpeded and 22 other possible actions. [More than 100 mayors](#) have now committed to take a total of more than 400 of these actions for the monarch butterfly in the coming year.

"Saint Paul continues to be a leader in addressing environmental issues, including the decline of monarchs in our community," said Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman. "We continue to work with volunteers to enhance monarch habitats in our parks, on the grounds of our municipal buildings and across our city."

"I am proud to take this pledge to promote monarch habitat in Minneapolis. We took important action last year to become a pollinator-friendly community, and I am pleased to build upon that action to encourage the creation of monarch habitats on City-owned property and in neighborhoods across our city," said Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges.

While monarchs are found across the United States, numbering some one billion in 1996, they've declined significantly in recent years, a result of numerous threats, particularly the loss of habitat due to agricultural practices, development and cropland conversion. Degradation of wintering habitat in Mexico and California has also had a negative impact on the species.

A [new study](#) released earlier this week by the Monarch Conservation Science Partnership states that there is a significant probability that in the next 20 years monarch butterflies will decline to the point of "quasi-extinction," with numbers so small and scattered that species recovery becomes impossible.

The study's authors strongly recommend conservation efforts that focus on habitat creation and restoration. Monarch caterpillars feed exclusively on the leaves of milkweed, the only host plant for this iconic butterfly species.

"From small business owners to elementary school students, everyone can play a part in helping preserve the monarch butterfly," Senator Klobuchar said. "With the butterfly rapidly disappearing, Mayor Coleman and Mayor Hodges' pledge to restore the monarch's habitat in the Twin Cities is another important step forward in our collaborative efforts to protect the monarch butterfly from extinction."

Fortunately for the monarchs, conservation groups and citizens are working together to create and restore habitat across the country. Currently the eastern population of monarch butterflies is beginning their [journey north](#) from Mexico's Sierra Madre Mountains where they roost in the oyamel fir trees during the winter months. As this generation of monarchs spreads north into Texas and up into the Central Monarch Flyway, the butterflies will find new habitat in our nation's cities.

"Thank you to St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges for committing to help monarchs and other pollinators in the Twin Cities. By working with communities across the country, we can help ensure a future filled with monarchs." said Tom Melius, Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Midwest Region. "A garden of native milkweed and other plants in your yard can ensure this iconic species and its amazing migration can be enjoyed for generations to come."

Learn more at [NWF.org/Monarchs](https://www.nwf.org/Monarchs) and get more updates from the National Wildlife Federation at [NWF.org/News](https://www.nwf.org/News).

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