House Bill 4857 (as passed by the House)
Sponsor: Representative Samantha Steckloff
House Committee: Agriculture
Senate Committee: Local Government

Date Completed: 1-26-24

CONTENT

The bill would amend Public Act 359 of 1941, which governs the control and destruction of noxious weeds, to specify that milkweed (any species of genus *Asclepias*) could not be considered a noxious weed.

Generally, noxious weeds are plant species that are regarded as nuisances and, according to the State, should be eradicated. The Act requires property owners, and allows local governments, to control and eradicate weeds defined as noxious weeds, such as Canada thistle, poison ivy, or poison sumac.

MCL 247.62

BACKGROUND

The genus Asclepias (milkweed) contains about 115 species that occur in the Americas, the most common type of which is common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca L.*). In particular, common milkweed is known as a weedy plant because of its ability to reproduce quickly. Milkweed contains levels of cardiac glycoside compounds that make the plants toxic to most insects and animals; however, for over 450 insects, among them the monarch butterfly, milkweed provides high amounts of food from its nectar, sap, leaves, and flowers. Other common insects that feed on milkweed include the red milkweed beetle (*Tetraopes tetraophthalmus*), the milkweed tussock caterpillar (*Euchaetes egle*), and the large (*Oncopeltus fasciatus*) and small (*Lygaeus kalmia*) red and black milkweed bugs.[1]

Legislative Analyst: Alex Krabill

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Bruce R. Baker
Bobby Canell

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[1] Taylor, David, United States Forest Service, *Plant of the Week – Common Milkweed*, 2024.