

# STOP THE USE OF BEE-KILLING PESTICIDES IN OUTDOOR RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPES

Vote YES on LD 155 with [Amendment B](#), as specified in the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee Minority Report.



## THE PROBLEM:

### Bees and other pollinators are at risk

Over the winter of 2019-2020, Maine beekeepers lost more than 40% of their honeybee colonies<sup>1</sup> -- over twice the loss considered sustainable. A recent study found that more than half of all native bees are in decline, including some of Maine's 270 species of native bees.<sup>2</sup>



Pollination is critical for many of our food crops, as well as the preservation of healthy ecosystems. Bee populations in decline hint at environmental challenges that can affect all life in an area.<sup>3</sup> Scientists point to several causes for bee die-offs, one of which is a class of pesticides called neonicotinoids (neonics).



### How do neonics work?

Neonics are neurotoxins, meaning they work by attacking the brains of insects, and are the world's most widely used insecticides. Neonics permeate plants - turning their nectar, pollen, and fruit toxic. They can be applied to a plant's roots or as a coating on a crop seed, which the plant then absorbs as it grows. Their ability to easily dissolve in water causes neonics to stay in soil, where they are easily carried long distances by rain or irrigation water.

A significant body of scientific evidence now links neonic use to massive bee population losses.<sup>4</sup> In addition to killing bees outright, research has shown that even low levels of these dangerous pesticides impair bees' ability to learn, find their way back to the hive, collect food, produce new queens, and mount an effective immune response. Neonics have also been linked to vast water and soil contamination, ecosystem-wide harms, and possible human health risks.

## THE SOLUTION

We need immediate action to limit bees' exposure to neonics. As natural habitat is lost to development and agricultural use, urban gardens and lawns have become increasingly essential for bees and other pollinators. Rep. Grohoski's bill (LD 155, Amendment B) would remove the four most harmful neonics from use for cosmetic purposes in residential landscapes, thus creating safe, nutritious havens for pollinators to thrive.



### Voting YES on LD 155, Amendment B:

- ✓ Stops the use of the most harmful neonics in residential areas
- ✓ Keeps home gardens & yards safe & healthy for bees
- ✓ Prioritizes our pollinators over "perfect-looking" yards
- ✓ Does not allow people to pay professionals to poison their yards
- ✓ Does not affect agricultural uses of these pesticides

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Will this legislation affect farmers?

The bill would not affect agricultural and forestry practices, only residential areas.

### Are safer alternatives available?

For nearly all uses, neonics are replaceable.<sup>5</sup> Because neonics are often used prophylactically where no pest problem exists, the best and most cost-effective alternative is often nothing. Where insecticides are used, non-synthetic or less-harmful synthetic substitutes exist.<sup>6</sup>

A recent Cornell University report found that ornamental, non-agricultural neonic uses pose serious risks to bees and are either unneeded or easily replaced. For example, in a given year, 80% of lawns and golf courses require no insecticide use to combat white grubs.<sup>7</sup> Even in the few instances where a pest problem exists and insecticide use would be effective, the report identifies equally effective alternatives that are less toxic to bees and people, such as chlorantraniliprole (CTP) and other anthranilic diamides. Moreover, the cost of CTP is likely to decrease in coming years. DuPont's patent for CTP expires in 2021,<sup>8</sup> and pesticide prices generally plummet as generic versions are introduced into the market.<sup>9</sup>

### Have other states passed similar legislation?

So far, four U.S. states have restricted the sale of neonics to ordinary consumers: Connecticut, Maryland, Vermont, and Massachusetts, while New Mexico has a bill under consideration. A bill in New Jersey, which would ban all non-agricultural uses of neonics, is awaiting a final vote in the Senate. Additionally, Europe has already banned all outdoor use of the four neonics that this bill affects and Canada has introduced restrictions on agricultural uses of neonics.<sup>10</sup>

### Why is it important to prohibit use by trained applicators in residential landscapes?

This bill takes an immediate step to make our towns and cities more bee-friendly by limiting the use of highly toxic, long-lived insecticides. Research has shown that legal uses of neonics, whether applied by a homeowner or licensed applicator, can cause harmful exposure to bees. Review of neonicotinoid labels found that the allowable application rate (in lbs/gallon) of some products intended for residential use (including use by licensed applicators) can be 12-120x higher than the agricultural rate. That higher use translates to higher exposure to bees, and a prettier lawn or rose garden is not worth that risk.<sup>11</sup>

**Ultimately, the passage of LD 155 (Amendment B) would prohibit the outdoor home use of these dangerous pesticides by residents and licensed applicators, allowing our backyard gardens to once again be safe havens for Maine's bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.**

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## Endnotes

1. Go to [Bee Informed Partnership's Colony Loss Map](#) and select "Winter" under the "Season" tab.
2. Kelsey Kopec, et al., [A systematic status review of North American and Hawaiian native bees](#), (Mar. 1, 2017)
3. Larissa Walker, [Can We Learn from the Bees in Time to Save Them?](#) (Apr. 25, 2013)
4. Daniel Cressey, [Largest-ever Study of Controversial Pesticides Finds Harm to Bees](#) (Jun. 29, 2017); Lennard Pisa et al., [An Update of the Worldwide Integrated Assessment \(WIA\) on Systemic Insecticides](#) (Nov. 9, 2017); Thomas Wood & Dave Goulson, [The Environmental Risks of Neonicotinoid Pesticides](#) (Jun. 7, 2017); Scott H. McArt et al., [High Pesticide Risk to Honey Bees Despite Low Focal Crop Pollen Collection During Pollination of a Mass Blooming Crop](#) (Apr. 19, 2017)
5. [The Best \(Nontoxic\) Pesticides and Insecticides, According to Gardeners](#) (May 28, 2019)
6. Tess Stynes, [Scotts Miracle-Gro to Remove Certain Insecticides from Ortho Products](#), (Apr. 12, 2016)
7. Travis A. Grout et al., [Neonicotinoid Insecticides in New York State](#), pg. 111, Cornell University (June 23, 2020)
8. QYR Research, [Global Chlorantraniliprole Market to Attain the Value of US\\$ 2120 Mn by 2025 end](#) (Jan 16, 2019)
9. [Crop Protection in an Increasingly Post-Patent World](#) (Jan. 13, 2015)
10. Daniel Raichel, [World Advances to Save Bees—EPA Stalls](#) (Sept. 14, 2018)
11. Jennifer Hopwood, et al., [How Neonics Can Kill Bees](#), pg. 64-65, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation (2nd ed., 2016)

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**A statewide ban on the cosmetic use of neonicotinoids in residential areas is supported by the following organizations and businesses:**

350 Maine	Maine Audubon	Saco River Farms
4 Season Farm Market	Maine Conservation Voters	Scratch Farm
Apple Acres Farm	Maine Lakes	Seek-No-Further Farmstead
Bayberry Gardens	Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association*	Serendipity Acres
Bishops Hill Farm*	Maine Public Health Association	Sierra Club Maine
Blue Bell Farm	Maine Youth for Climate Justice	Snakeroot Organic Farm
Bluebird Hill Farm	ME Strikes	Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative*
Conservation Law Foundation	Marr Pond Farm	Spruce Bush Farm
Cornerstone Farm	MeadowFall Farm	Stonecipher Farm
Defend Our Health	Meadowood Farm	Sweet Relief Farm
Dharma Farm	Morgan Bay Farm	The Belfast Garden Club*
Dooryard Farm, LLC	Natural Resources Council of Maine	The Good Shepherd Farm
Ecology Learning Center	Nettie Fox Farm	Two Farmers Farm
Environment Maine	Old Sheep Meadows	Valley View Farm
Fail Better Farm	Overland Apiaries*	Whatley Farm
Friends of Casco Bay	Patch Farm	Wild Meadow Farm*
Frith Farm LLC	Peacemeal Farm	Wild Tilth Farm
Ginger Hill Bees*	Maine Physicians for Social Responsibility	Wise Acres Farm
Goranson Farm		Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
Green Spark Farm		
Levesque's Organic Farm		

\*Beekeepers Represented

## **Excerpts from supportive testimony for LD 155 (Amendment B):**

“It is my belief that where economic welfare or public health is not at risk, neonicotinoids should not be used... Therefore, while there are alternatives to neonicotinoids for many situations that homeowners face, I think that LD 155 has much merit.” -- *Frank Drummond, UMaine Professor Emeritus of Insect Ecology and Insect Pest Management and 2017 Distinguished Professor*

“We applaud Representative Grohoski’s efforts to protect pollinators in Maine.” -- *New England Pest Management Association*

“Given the range of concerns about neonic pesticides, both to the environment and to public health, taking a precautionary and frankly measured approach, eliminating their use where children and the general public are more likely to be exposed, should be common sense.” -- *Sarah Woodbury, Director of Advocacy, Defend Our Health*

**To date, 10,232 Maine people have signed a petition asking Maine policymakers to support legislation to ban problematic uses of neonics in Maine.**