

March 30, 2017

Jeff Bezos
Chief Executive Officer
Amazon
410 Terry Ave North
Seattle, WA 98109

Re: Protecting Pollinators by Removing Neonicotinoid Products from your Site

Dear Mr. Bezos,

We are writing on behalf of our millions of members and supporters throughout the country to encourage you to help drive positive environmental change, specifically with regard to the protection of pollinators. The undersigned organizations represent national and local nonprofit and public interest membership groups and environmentally conscious businesses that have been working for years to protect vulnerable pollinator populations. Our efforts have led to pollinator protection for bees, butterflies, birds and bats at the federal and local levels, as well as better public understanding of the dangers posed by hazardous pesticide chemicals.

With this letter, we are asking that you help protect pollinator species by committing to not offer on your website products containing systemic neonicotinoid pesticides that have been linked to pollinator declines. The independent scientific literature associates the use of bee-toxic pesticides, particularly neonicotinoids, with impaired pollinator health and decline, including reduced populations of native bees, butterflies and other beneficial organisms. In light of federal inertia, there is an urgent need for retail leaders to promote policies and take action to reduce further loss of pollinator populations. **Therefore, we are calling on Amazon to use its influence as the largest online retailer in the U.S. to lead marketplace change and protect pollinators by prohibiting the sale of pollinator-toxic neonicotinoid pesticide products, and educating consumers on the availability of safer, “pollinator friendly” alternatives.**

Pollinators are beneficial organisms and include a wide range of species, such as flies, beetles, birds, butterflies, moths and bees, and are a part of a healthy biodiverse ecosystem. They are critical to our food system, providing billions of dollars of ecosystem services upon which farmers depend to produce their crops. Habitat loss, parasites and disease, climate change and pesticide use all threaten pollinator health, with the neonicotinoid class of pesticides receiving the greatest attention from scientists, beekeepers and advocacy groups as a major driver in pollinator decline. Last year alone, beekeepers lost 44.1% of their colonies - losses that are staggering and unsustainable. In January 2017, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service took unprecedented action and officially listed the rusty patch bumblebee as an endangered species, noting that, “[n]eonicotinoids have been strongly implicated as the cause of the decline

of bees.” The first bumblebee - and first bee overall in the continental U.S. - to ever be placed on the list, the rusty patch bumblebee may be the “canary in the coalmine” if no actions are taken to reverse its decline.

Across the nation, Maryland, Minnesota, Connecticut and over 35 local communities have taken grassroots and policy initiatives to protect pollinators. These actions curb or eliminate overall toxic pesticide use, especially the use neonicotinoid products, which is one of the most significant ways to prevent acute bee deaths and reverse pollinator declines. Amazon has the opportunity to build on its commitment to promoting sustainable practices and reducing the company’s environmental impact by supporting pollinator protection efforts.

Neonicotinoids are the active pesticide ingredients found in many home and garden pesticide products - many of which are currently sold on your website (see attached product list) - that target the central nervous system of insects, causing paralysis and death at high doses. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, these insecticides are highly toxic to bees, and since their introduction to the marketplace, significant evidence has been uncovered indicating that neonicotinoids play a role in pollinator decline. They have been found in pollen, nectar and bee hives, and can impair bee reproductive, navigation and foraging functions. Even at low doses, these pesticides can render bees more susceptible to viruses, parasites and other diseases, and lead to devastating bee losses.

Residues of these systemic pesticides are also likely found in many of the treated live plant products sold on your website, as they persist in the environment and are found in the tissue, pollen and nectar of plants, as well as waterways and soil. Many of these plants are not labeled and consumers are unaware that they may contain bee-toxic residues. We believe that restricting the sale of neonicotinoid products is critical to nurturing and protecting healthy and diverse ecosystems across the country. Such actions are imperative to protecting natural resources, specifically bees, butterflies and birds, as well as promoting water quality and soil health. By taking action, Amazon would be joining with other retail leaders, such as Home Depot and Lowe’s, that have committed to getting rid of neonicotinoid products and treated plants.

Given that one out of every three bites of food we take is dependent on pollinators, we trust that you appreciate the seriousness of this issue, and recognize the importance of taking steps to limit the presence of bee-toxic products in the marketplace. Because of the federal government’s ongoing failure to take meaningful action against these products in the United States, despite overwhelming evidence they contribute to pollinator declines, we are asking environmentally responsible companies to lead the way in ensuring that pollinators are protected from harmful chemicals.

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue. **We look forward to working with you to remove neonicotinoid products and neonicotinoid-treated plants from your website as well as to increase public education on pollinator friendly alternatives.** We welcome the

opportunity to answer any questions you may have on the subject and would also be happy to explore other ways to promote pollinator health through your website, such as the increasing pollinator habitat or educating the public on this issue.

Sincerely,



Jay Feldman
Executive Director
Beyond Pesticides

American Bird Conservancy
Anacostia Watershed Society
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Food Safety
Central Maryland Beekeepers Association
Chesapeake Bay Savers
Cleanwater Linganore, Inc.
Community F.A.R.E
Delmarva Ornithological Society
Equal Exchange
Fair World Project
Friends of the Earth
Hood College
IFOAM- Organics International
Karma Farm
Mom's Organic Market
Maryland Ornithological Society
Maryland Pesticide Education Network
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES)
Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Natural Resources Defense Council
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Massachusetts (NOFA-MA)
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY)
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
Organic Consumers Association

Organic Seed Alliance
Pesticide Action Network North America
Pollinate Minnesota
Rachel Carson Council
Regeneration Massachusetts
Safegrow Montgomery County
Sierra Club
Toxic Free North Carolina
Toxics Action Center