Vote YES on HB646

"An Act Relative to the Labeling Signage, And Restrictions On the Sales and Use of Bee-Toxic Pesticides"

A.K.A.

"The Saving New Hampshire's Pollinators Act"

Summary

HB646 restricts the use of neonicotinoids and other systemic insecticides in order to protect New Hampshire's declining pollinator populations. It tasks state agencies with developing best practices to enable farmers and New Hampshire residents to readily replace the use of bee-toxic pesticides, which affect all pollinators, with alternative pest management approaches. HB 646 also establishes a panel of experts to conduct an annual review of the scientific literature, and determine whether other pesticides that pose a threat to pollinators and pollinator habitat should be recommended for restriction by the state legislature.

Our Ask

***We ask that you please VOTE YES on* HB646.**

Background

- Honey bees and other pollinators account for 1 in 3 bites of food, but recent science shows these beneficial species are under threat from the use of systemic, persistent "bee-toxic" insecticides defined in HB646.
- Systemic, bee-toxic pesticides have been shown, even at low levels, to impair foraging, navigational, and learning behavior in bees, as well as suppress their immune system to the point of increasing their susceptibility to pathogens and disease.[1]
- Studies show these chemicals can be taken up by flowering plants and exuded in the pollen, nectar, and dew droplets honey bees and other pollinators feed on.[2]
- Beekeepers in New Hampshire lost a reported 60.4% of their honey bee colonies in 2016/17 and 55.2% in 2017/18. This is unsustainable and well over the national average for that period – 33.2% and 40.1%, respectively. [3] Beekeepers have a challenging time absorbing losses greater than 15% each year, but the national average has remained at roughly 30% since 2006.[4]

HB646 Will Protect New Hampshire's Declining Pollinator Populations

- HB646 restricts the use of four classes of bee-toxic insecticides that scientific studies identify as posing significant risks to pollinator populations.
- Recognizing the need to identify alternatives to current uses of these chemicals for both the agricultural industry and New Hampshire residents, HB 646 tasks state agencies with developing best practices to transition away from the use of bee-toxic pesticides.
- Other pesticides registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are likely to adversely impact pollinators and their habitat. To determine whether there are other bee-toxic pesticides that the legislature should consider restricting in order to protect pollinator populations, HB646 establishes a pollinator protection panel comprised of 15 experts in farming, pollinator health, and ecosystems.

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[1] Harriott, N. 2014. Bees, Birds and Beneficials: How fields of poison adversely affect non-target organisms. *Pesticides and You*. Vol. 33, No. 4 Winter 2013-14. http://www.beyondpesticides.org/assets/media/documents/infoservices/pesticidesandyou/documents/BeesBirdsBeneficials.pdf

[2] Mogren C and Lundgren J. 2016. Neonicotinoid-contaminated pollinator strips adjacent to cropland reduce honey bee nutritional status. Scientific Reports 6, Article number: 29608 http://www.nature.com/articles/srep29608

[3] Bee Informed Partnership. 2016/17. Total Annual Losses by State. https://bip2.beeinformed.org/loss-map/; Bee Informed Partnership. 2017/18. Total Annual Losses by State. https://bip2.beeinformed.org/loss-map/

[4] Ibid

- HB646 only addresses outdoor uses of bee-toxic pesticides. It does not address those registered for use indoors, for lice or bedbugs, or for pet care in the management of fleas, ticks, heartworms and other pests.
- The Legislative Budget Assistant has determined that this legislation, as introduced, has a total fiscal impact of less than $10,000 in each of the fiscal years 2020 through 2023.

EPA Regulation has Failed New Hampshire Pollinators

- Many bee-toxic pesticides were first registered by EPA under a process known as "conditional registration," which has been criticized by the Government Accountability Office for its unreliability.[5]
- EPA only tests the active ingredient in pesticide formulations, despite the fact that pesticide products can contain multiple active ingredients and act "synergistically."[6]
- EPA does not test the toxicity of "inert ingredients" or combinations of inert ingredients and active ingredients, despite the fact that they may comprise up to 99.9% of a pesticide formulation.[7]
- Recent EPA reforms aimed at protecting pollinators are an inadequate response to this ongoing crisis. While other international regulatory agencies, including Health Canada and the European Food Safety Authority,[89] have enacted broad restrictions on bee-toxic pesticides, EPA' actions have been limited to minor changes to certain pesticide labels.

Tracking State and Local Reform

- Connecticut lawmakers enacted a comprehensive package of pollinator protections in 2016, establishing bee-toxic neonicotinoids as restricted use, and creating a process to develop best practices for fostering pollinator habitat on farms and resident backyards.[10]
- Maryland also enacted a pollinator protection act in 2016, restricting consumer use of bee-toxic neonicotinoids.[11] In recognition of the continued threat these chemicals pose, that law was expanded in 2017 to prohibit the use of not only neonicotinoids but also other pesticides toxic to bees on state-owned pollinator habitat.[12]
- At least 45 communities throughout the United States have passed policies that restrict the use of bee-toxic pesticides. Dover and Portsmouth, NH have both passed laws encouraging alternative pest management approaches that do not utilize bee-toxic pesticides on their public lands. [13]

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[5] Government Accountability Office. 2013. EPA Should Take Steps to Improve Its Oversight of Conditional Registrations. http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-145

[6] Donley, N. 2016. Toxic Concoctions: How the EPA Ignores the Dangers of Pesticide Cocktails. http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/pesticides_reduction/pdfs/Toxic_concoctions.pdf

[7] Beyond Pesticides. 2014. Groups Call for Labeling of 300 Inert Ingredients as EPA Delists 72 Already Discontinued. http://beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/2014/10/epa-delisting-of-72-inert-ingredients-no-longer-used-called-inadequate-response-to-problem/

[8] CBC Radio. 2018. Canada bans neonic pesticides implicated in bee declines. https://www.cbc.ca/radio/quirks/august-18-2018-canada-bans-neonics-tracking-animals-from-space-and-more-1.4786729/canada-bans-neonic-pesticides-implicated-in-bee-declines-1.4786738

[9] Carrington, D. 2018. EU agrees total ban on bee-harming pesticides. *The Guardian.* https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/apr/27/eu-agrees-total-ban-on-bee-harming-pesticides

[10] Connecticut General Assembly. 2016. SB 231- An Act Concerning Pollinator Health. https://www.cga.ct.gov/2016/TOB/s/2016SB-00231-R02-SB.htm

[11] Maryland General Assembly. 2016. HB0211 - Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Restrictions on Sales and Use (Pollinator Protection Act of 2016). http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?pid=billpage&tab=subject3&id=hb0211&stab=01&ys=2016RS

[12] Maryland General Assembly. 2016. HB0830 - Pollinator Habitat Plans - Plan Contents - Requirements and Prohibition. http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?pid=billpage&tab=subject3&id=hb0830&stab=01&ys=2017RS

[13] Beyond Pesticides. 2019. Map of U.S. Pesticide Reform Policies. https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1VLpVWvifO2JOrgxf1-d1DLyDruE&ll=39.03573413957713%2C-94.19459570507814&z=5