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## Maine Chapter

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Senator Jim Dill, Chair  
Representative Craig Hickman  
Members of the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

February 13, 2020

LD 2083 An Act to Require the Board of Pesticide Control To Annually Publish Certain Information Regarding Pesticides and To Prohibit Certain Uses of Neonicotinoids

Dear Chairpersons Dill and Hickman and members of ACF,

We write as representatives of Sierra Club Maine's 28,000 members and supporters. Sierra Club is the oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization in the US. We strongly urge the Committee to vote "ought to pass" on LD 2083.

The class of pesticides known as Neonicotinoids is known to have far ranging impacts on insects and in particular on Hymenoptera (bees). Bees are not the only insect pollinators. Butterflies, flies and other insects provide a huge service to the planet in pollinating flora. Worldwide there has been a catastrophic loss of insects directly tied to neonicotinoids, ("Defaunation in the Anthropocene", Science July 2014). And as Harvard entomologist, E.O. Wilson says, without insects, the rest of life including humans "would disappear within months."

The widespread use of these pesticides has dramatically impacted our fauna here in Maine. Most drivers have noted the lack of bugs splattering windshields in summer months. What is perhaps very notable is the dearth of lightning bugs in the past three years. Only four years ago, our own fields were aglow with thousands of lightning bugs, a sight most children and their adults delight in every year. Far from being a casual loss, they are more or less the canaries in the coal mine.

Passed on through pollen, neonicotinoids are also showing up in wetlands and streams resulting in far more widespread damage to aquatic invertebrates- as reported by Prairie Scientist, Christy Morrissey, U. of Saskatchewan. We don't think of the huge impact that a continuation of insect die off could have as the dearth of food moves up the food chain, but the result would be rapid starvation of most species. We have the opportunity to choose another path and to protect the expanding agricultural movement here in Maine. We could once again be the Food Basket of the Northeast. But we must move forward causing least harm.



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An alternative in agriculture is the fast-growing movement towards Regenerative Practices that use no-till, cover cropping and promote beneficial insect populations, providing much more sustainable, long term agricultural prospects.

Neonicotinoids do not belong in this scenario. The damage they do is well proven and devastating. We therefore urge the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to vote “ought to pass” on LD 2083.

Respectfully Submitted

Becky Bartovics  
Legislative Team