April 1, 2019
TO:  Chairman Drew Springer, Jr. and Members of the Committee
RE:  House Bill 2483 - Comments to the Agriculture and Livestock Committee

The Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club supports Rep. Jessica Farrar’s bill, HB 2483, to prohibit the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on the right-of-way of public roads and highways.

In addition to concerns about colony health of the non-native European honey bee (Apis mellifera) and related effects on agricultural food production, Texas Parks and Wildlife has named fourteen species of native bees to the list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

Neonicotinoid pesticides can be sprayed on the foliage or on the soil or used to coat seed. When applied to the soil or seed, they are taken up into the different parts of the plant and can concentrate in the pollen and nectar upon which bees feed. They are highly water soluble.

The pesticide class has both lethal and sub-lethal effects. Laboratory and semi-field studies indicate increased mortality, and impaired feeding for honeybees, bumblebees, and wild bees and reduced colony growth for honeybees and bumblebees. Field studies have documented effect at the individual level.

The effects of neonicotinoids are magnified when combined with pyrethroids and fungicides.

In, 2018, the European Union, including the United Kingdom, banned the use of three major neonicotinoids (clothianidin, imidacloprid, and thiamethoxam) from outdoor crop use due to documented effects on honeybee and wild bee pollinators.

We urge the Texas Legislature to take the first step to protecting honeybee and native bee populations in Texas from the effects of neonicotinoid pesticides.

Prepared by Evelyn L. Merz, Chapter Conservation Chair

For questions or additional information, please contact:
Evelyn Merz, Chapter Conservation Chair at 713-644-8228, 713-201-4061(c) or elmerz@hal-pc.org
Or Cyrus Reed, Chapter Conservation Director, at 512-740-4086 or cbhreed@gmail.com