



MARYLAND CHAPTER

Enjoy, explore, and protect the planet

The Pollinator Protection Act

Honeybees in alarming decline

Beekeepers have reported average hive losses of 30 percent or higher each year since 2006; in 2012, Maryland's beekeepers lost nearly 50 percent of their hives—this is not sustainable. Studies confirm that toxic neonicotinoid (aka *neonics*) pesticides contribute to honey bee mortality, as well as to declines in native pollinators, birds and aquatic life. In addition to killing bees outright, even low levels of these toxic pesticides impair bees' ability to learn, find their way back to the hive, collect food, produce new queens and mount an effective immune response.

A threat to our food supply

Honey bees and other pollinators are responsible for one out of every three bites of food we eat. Bees pollinate 71 of the 100 crops that make up 90 percent of the world's food supply. Many fruits and vegetables, including apples, blueberries, strawberries, carrots and broccoli, as well as almonds and coffee, rely on bees.

Not-so "bee-friendly"

More than half of "bee-friendly" plants purchased at Home Depot, Walmart and Lowes stores in 18 cities across the U.S. and Canada, including in Maryland, had levels of neonicotinoids at sufficient levels to kill bees outright, according to 2014 Friends of the Earth study.

Risks to human health and other wildlife

Neonics also pose a risk to human health; they can impair the developing nervous system and cause brain damage in children, affect ovaries and hormonal balance, and cause cell mutations. Neonics also threaten aquatic life and have been linked to death of molting blue crabs and declines in macro-invertebrates. A recent USGS study found neonics widespread in Midwestern streams at levels toxic to aquatic life.

The Pollinator Protection Act

We need to limit our use of this harmful, bee-killing pesticide and inform Marylanders about its risks. Tell the Maryland General Assembly, and Governor Hogan, to pass **the Pollinator Protection Act**, which would label nursery plants treated with toxic, bee-killing pesticides and restrict their consumer use.

For more information: <http://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/legislation>

To get involved: Legislation@MDSierra.org

Supported by the Smart on Pesticides Maryland coalition, including more than 50 organizations and institutions representing communities, health care providers, farmers, environmentalists, Waterkeepers, interfaith congregations as well as environmental justice, public health and wildlife advocates.