



NHCSL

THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS

RESOLUTION

No. 2019-19

Improving Pollinator Health by Decreasing Exposure to Neonicotinoids and Adopting Improved Management Practices

Reported to the Caucus by the NHCSL
Energy, Infrastructure and Environment Task Force
Sen. Moisés “Mo” Denis (NV), Chair

Sponsored by Del. Alfonso López (VA)

Unanimously ratified by the Caucus on December 5, 2019

- 1 **WHEREAS**, the number of Hispanic farm operators in the United States is higher than
- 2 ever, up 21% to 99,734 since 2007;¹ and,
- 3 **WHEREAS**, at least 83% of all farm workers are Hispanic; ²and,

¹ https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Highlights/2014/Highlights_Hispanic_Farmers.pdf

Refer to table 1 on p.1

² https://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/ETAOP_2019-01_NAWS_Research_Report_13.pdf

Refer to p.2 *Birthplace, Ethnicity, and Race*. (Other organizations such as Farm Worker Justice estimate an even higher percentage)

Improving Pollinator Health by Decreasing Exposure to Neonicotinoids

4 **WHEREAS**, a third of the world’s food production depends on bees,³ including staple
 5 crops such as cotton, potatoes, onions, and cabbage,⁴ as well as specialty crops such
 6 as coffee beans, almonds and cashews; and,

7 **WHEREAS**, pollinator species, particularly honey bees and wild bees, are a critical
 8 part of agricultural production making their welfare essential to the livelihood of
 9 those farmworkers, farm operators, and more generally human survival;⁵ and,

10 **WHEREAS**, the recent decline of our bee populations is directly correlated with
 11 decreased crop yield in the United States;⁶ and,

12 **WHEREAS**, at least 22 states have enacted legislation regarding pollinator health;⁷
 13 and,

14 **WHEREAS**, some of the reasons for bee colony decline include climate change, air
 15 pollution, the varoa mite, habitat destruction, and poor management practices;⁸ and,

16 **WHEREAS**, scientists and governments have identified a particular class of systemic
 17 insecticides, called neonicotinoids (neonics);⁹ as a significant threat to pollinator
 18 species;¹⁰ and,

19 **WHEREAS**, the biologically systematic distribution of neonicotinoids allows the
 20 insecticide to be absorbed completely by the crop; and,

³ https://e360.yale.edu/features/declining_bee_populations_pose_a_threat_to_global_agriculture
 2/3rds of the world’s food production depends on self-pollinated or wind-pollinated crops, many staple
 crops such as wheat, corn, and rice are all pollinated in this manner.

⁴ The Importance of Bees, Food Security, available at <https://www.worldbeeday.org/en/about/the-importance-of-bees.html>

⁵ https://www.sustainweb.org/foodfacts/bees_are_important/

⁶ <https://phys.org/news/2017-02-bee-decline-threatens-crop-production.html>

⁷ <http://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/pollinator-health.aspx>
 Minnesota, Oklahoma, Vermont, Virginia, Indiana, Maryland, Oregon, California, Kentucky, Ohio,
 Washington, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Texas, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa and Virginia, New York, Oklahoma.

⁸ What’s Killing the Bees and Why it Matters, <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/sustainable-agriculture/save-the-bees/>

⁹ mgaleg.maryland.gov/2016RS/bills/hb/hb0211f.pdf “Neonicotinoid pesticide” means any pesticide
 containing a chemical belonging to the neonicotinoid class of chemicals, including: Imidacloprid,
 Nithiazine, Acetamiprid, Clothianidin, Dinotefuran, Thiacloprid, Thiamethoxan, and any other chemically
 similar compounds.

¹⁰ <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/bee-deaths-FS.pdf>

21 **WHEREAS**, plants treated with neonicotinoids absorb the insecticide, contaminating
22 the pollen and nectar which then harm bees and other pollinators that feed on the
23 plant’s nectar;¹¹ and,

24 **WHEREAS**, neonicotinoids were first introduced in 1990 and quickly became the
25 fastest growing and most heavily used class of insecticides in bee-pollinated crops;¹²
26 and,

27 **WHEREAS**, honeybees and other pollinators are dying off at unprecedented rates
28 resulting in the rapid decline of managed honeybee colonies¹³ by 40.7% between
29 April 1st, 2018 and April 1st, 2019;¹⁴ and,

30 **WHEREAS**, within the last decade pollinators are being exposed to a variety of
31 pesticides with “up to 17 different pesticides detected in one sample of pollen from a
32 honeybee”;¹⁵ and,

33 **WHEREAS**, pollinator health is gravely affected by habitat loss and low temperatures
34 and an integral North American pollinator, the rusty patched bumble bee and several
35 wild bee species experienced severe decline. Since the late 1990’s the number of
36 populations has declined by 87% [rusty patched bumble bee];¹⁶and,

37 **WHEREAS**, in 2013, the European Union voted to suspend the use of three
38 neonicotinoids (Imidacloprid, Clothiandin, and Thiamethoxam) on certain crops due
39 to their damaging effect on pollinators;¹⁷ and,

40 **WHEREAS**, in May 2018 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) removed 12
41 products containing neonicotinoids and canceled their pesticide registrations as a

¹¹ Van der Sluijs J.P., et al., “Conclusions of the Worldwide Integrated Assessment on the risks of neonicotinoids and fipronil to biodiversity and ecosystem functioning,” Environmental Science Pollution Research Institute, January 2015, vol. 22, pp. 148–154

¹² *ibid*

¹³ Managed honey bee populations are populations kept by commercial beekeepers

¹⁴ <https://abcnews.go.com/US/40-decline-honey-bee-population-winter-unsustainable-experts/story?id=64191609>

Data taken from the Bee Informed Partnership, a nonprofit associated with the University of Maryland

¹⁵ <http://sos-bees.org/causes/>

Refer to Brittain and Potts 2011

¹⁶ <https://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/insects/rpbb/FAQsFinalListing.html>

Refer to *What’s killing the Bees- and Why it Matters*

¹⁷

https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/approval_active_substances/approval_renewal/neonicotinoids_en

42 result of a voluntary agreement with three major agribusinesses: Bayer, Syngenta,
43 and Valent;¹⁸and,

44 **WHEREAS**, despite recognition of their danger, only 12 of the 59 products containing
45 the neonicotinoids (Clothianidin, Thiamethoxam, and Imidacloprid) ¹⁹ .
46 Neonicotinoids used in farming practices still remain on the market particularly the
47 most common application²⁰ by seed coating;²¹ and,

48 **WHEREAS**, Maryland became the first state in the country to pass the Pollinator
49 Protection Act which aims to protect and restore pollinator habitats;²² and,

50 **WHEREAS**, pollinator-friendly practices involve using native plants, planting a
51 variety of flowers that bloom continually, and using foliage to create nesting habitats
52 for bees.²³

53 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State
54 Legislators (NHCSL) urges state governments to ban all farming uses of neonicotinoid
55 insecticides; and,

56 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that, in order to effectuate the ban, NHCSL recommends
57 that states enact legislation so that:

58 (1) Plants or plant material sold at retail that have been treated with
59 neonicotinoids shall bear a label that states the following:

60 “WARNING: this product has been treated with neonicotinoid
61 pesticides that are found to harm bees and other pollinators. This plant
62 material or plant may not be used for commercial farming and is only
63 intended for personal or home use on a small scale.” and,

64 (2) Plants treated with neonicotinoids are prohibited from being labeled or
65 advertised as beneficial to pollinators; and,

¹⁸ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-05-20/pdf/2019-10447.pdf>

¹⁹ *ibid*

²⁰ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4284386/>

²¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/03/17/2015-06139/product-cancellation-order-for-certain-pesticide-registrations>

²² <http://www.mdpestnet.org/take-action/smart-on-pesticides-maryland/pollinator-protection-act-passes/>

²³ <https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/features/panels/PollinatorFriendlyPractices.pdf>

66 (3) The respective state agency tasked with overseeing and regulating the
67 agricultural industry takes and document measures to limit pollinator
68 exposure to neonicotinoids.

69 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that additional measures outlined in the Pollinator
70 Protection Act can be taken to help foster and protect the honeybee populations by
71 instituting pollinator-friendly practices²⁴.

72 THE NHCSL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THIS RESOLUTION
73 ON AUGUST 3, 2019 AT ITS SUMMER MEETING IN SANTA FE, NM.

74 THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS UNANIMOUSLY
75 RATIFIED THIS RESOLUTION ON DECEMBER 5, 2019, AT THE ANNUAL MEETING IN
76 SAN JUAN, PR.

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<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?pid=billpage&stab=01&id=sb0198&tab=subject3&ys=2016RS>