

Testimony of Eric Gally on behalf of the Maryland Pesticide Education Network in SUPPORT of House Bill 208

The Maryland Pesticide Education Network respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 208, a bill that corrects an unintended loophole in the original Pollinator Protection Act of 2016.

When we all worked on this in 2016, the intent was to reduce public use and consumption of neonicotinoid pesticides.

The first thought was to classify neonicotinoids as restricted-use pesticides – which means they could only be purchased and used by certified applicators or their authorized representatives – who undergo training, take a closed-book examination and have to show their ID to purchase these pesticides. A dealer may not sell or distribute a restricted use pesticide to any person other than a permitted dealer, a certified applicator or that person's authorized representative.

Rather than go that route we decided to try something a little less restrictive. The formal certification and permit were not required. But the intent of the bill was that typical retail stores like Target, Walmart, local hardware stores, and others would not have these products on the shelves. Homeowners would choose from the many other products that were available and use would decline. Typical farm and feed stores where the staff had more expertise would continue selling but keep the products out of reach and not sell to people who were not eligible to use the products.

As you will hear from Bonnie Raindrop, that hasn't turned out to be the case. Stores went and got their dealer permits and the products are everywhere, next to all the other products, without any marking or warning to the public that they are not supposed to use the product.

So we are asking for your help to close this loophole and take us back to the spirit and intent of the original law.

We are flexible and look forward to working with everyone along the way – as long as we can find a way to end up with true restricted public access to these products as was originally intended. Thank you very much and we urge a favorable report.