



**Olivia Bartlett, Co-Lead, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team**

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation

**Testimony on:** HB0208 – Agriculture – Neonicotinoid Pesticides – Sale and Storage

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** January 29, 2021

**Bill Contacts:** Delegates Healey and Stein

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 2500 members who live in a wide range of communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all the members of our communities healthy and safe in a clean environment. DTMG strongly supports HB0208 because it will help reduce use of neonicotinoid pesticides that harm the bees that pollinate our food crops.

Since their introduction in the 1990s, neonicotinoids have become the world’s most widely used class of insecticides, sold in at least 120 countries to help control damaging insects and protect agricultural production. Neonic pesticides are effective in reducing infestations of sucking insects, such as aphids, on many types of crops, including rice, cotton, corn, potatoes and soybeans. The pesticides are both sprayed on plants and coated on seeds.

However, a growing body of scientific evidence indicates that neonicotinoids as they are typically used harm bees, which are essential pollinators in food production, and are a key factor in the widespread colony collapse disorder of bees. Neonicotinoids have been shown to disrupt bees' immune systems, making them susceptible to viral infections to which the bees are normally resistant, decrease survival and egg-laying by queen bees, and to have other harmful effects on honey bees and bumble bees. Neonicotinoids are also seen by scientists as at least partly to blame for a broader “insect apocalypse” in which over 40% of the 1 million known species of insects are facing extinction due to over use of pesticides and other factors. The insecticides have also been tied to serious defects in white-tailed deer, deepening concerns over the chemical’s potential to harm large mammals, including people. A global survey covering every continent with honeybees found neonicotinoids in three-fourths of honey samples, indicating the widespread nature of these pesticides and raising concerns about the presence of neonicotinoid pesticides in our food.

HB0208 will take a small step in the right direction toward addressing this problem by making sure that these potentially dangerous neonic pesticides are sold only to a certified applicator or a farmer and that they are stored “behind the counter” in businesses that sell them, so they are inaccessible to ordinary customers who are not adequately trained in their proper application. This is the bare minimum that must be done to protect our pollinators and our food supply.

Therefore, DTMG strongly supports HB0208 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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