

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Testimony on: SB932 - Pesticide and Pest Control - State-Owned Property
- Pesticide Use Restrictions and Pollinator Habitat
Submitting: Dave Arndt
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: Feb. 18, 2025

Dear Mr. Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for reading my testimony today in strong support of SB932, the Pesticide and Pest Control - State-Owned Property - Pesticide Use Restrictions and Pollinator Habitat.

We depend on bees to pollinate 70 of the 100 crops that provide 90% of our food, but bees are fighting an uphill battle of pervasive pesticide use and colony collapse. Over all, bees are already facing record losses, we are seeing Colony Collapse Disorder decimate 40% of hives all over Maryland. Also troubling is the collapse of the monarch butterfly with the population dropping by 59% over the last year.

One of the main culprits is a group of toxic pesticides called neonics that attack bees' brains, paralyzing and ultimately killing them. Ending the worst uses of bee-killing pesticides can help protect pollinators.

Fortunately, we know how to help them: protecting already-existing bee habitat, expanding habitat by planting pollinator-friendly plants on public lands, and ending the worst uses of the pesticides that are killing them. One of the main culprits is a group of toxic pesticides called neonicotinoids that attack bees' brains, paralyzing and ultimately killing them. Ending the worst uses of bee-killing pesticides can help protect pollinators. Incidentally, these pesticides have negative effects on humans and our pets, including neurological problems, reproductive issues, and cancer.

This bill is a great first step in saving our bees and other pollinators. It requires the Department of Agriculture to develop a model pesticide and pollinator habitat management plan to be implemented on State-owned and managed property. It also designates that at least 20% of the unencumbered land may not be treated by any aesthetic pesticide. And when practicable, prioritize the use of native plants to create habitats for key pollinators.

Together, we can save the bees and pollinators.

For all of these reasons, I strongly support SB932 and urge a **FAVORABLE** report.
Thank you,

Dave Arndt
Co-Chair Maryland Legislative Coalition – Climate Justice Wing