

February 4, 2026

House Bill 91 - Agriculture - Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Prohibitions

Environment & Transportation Committee

Opposed

Keith Shortall
Shortall Farms LLC
Easton, Maryland

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to **House Bill 91**.

I am a farmer in Talbot County, growing corn, soybeans, and small grains. The ban on neonicotinoid treated seed for corn, soybeans and wheat in House Bill 91 would negatively impact my ability to operate my farm, mitigate risk, and remain economically viable.

Neonicotinoid seed treatments are an important tool on my farm. I use neonicotinoid seed treatments on 100% of my acres to protect my crops. Without neonicotinoid seed treatments, I would expect to experience significant losses.

Replanting an acre of corn costs me \$150/ac. Replanting an acre of soybeans costs \$95/ac. Having to replant my grain acres due to pre-emergent loss would cost my family farm over \$30,000 per year and be economically devastating to our small business. Using foliar applications of neonicotinoids or other pesticides after the crops are out of the ground would cost me \$40 per acre. These are not hypothetical impacts, they are real losses farmers in this state will experience.

House Bill 91 would also severely limit my access to seed. Maryland grain farmers rely on a regional and national seed market. Last year, I planted 4 different varieties of seed to meet the specific needs of each of my fields conditions. Seed companies have clearly stated they will not custom treat and distribute seed for a state with less a half a percent of the nationwide grain acres. As a result, this bill would reduce the availability of competitively priced seed options and force me to accept whatever untreated seed happens to be available.

Neonicotinoid seed treatments also support my conservation practices. They allow me to plant 300 acres of cover crops, and implement 300 acres of no-till by protecting vulnerable seedlings without repeated insecticide applications. Seed treatments are a targeted, preventative tool that

reduce the need for later spraying. Removing them would push farmers toward older, less precise insecticides that require more frequent and higher-volume applications.

Neonicotinoids remain approved for use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which is actively engaged in a multi-year scientific review of these products. Preempting that process at places me as a farmer at a disadvantage to farmers in surrounding states.

House Bill 91 would increase my costs, reduce my yields, limit my seed choices, and undermine conservation practices I rely on. I respectfully urge the committee to **oppose House Bill 91** and allow Maryland farmers to continue using proven, science-based tools to protect their crops and livelihoods.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Shortall

Shortall Farms LLC

Talbot County, Maryland