

**February 4, 2026**

**House Bill 0091 – Agriculture – Neonicotinoid Pesticides – Prohibitions  
Environment & Transportation Committee**

**Position: Opposed**

**Brent Johnson**

**Lyons Johnson Farms**

**Talbot County, Maryland**

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

My name is Brent Johnson, and I farm in Talbot County at Lyons Johnson Farms, where we grow corn, soybeans, and small grains. The proposed ban on neonicotinoid-treated seed for corn, soybeans, and wheat would directly and negatively impact my ability to manage risk, protect my crops, and remain economically viable.

Neonicotinoid seed treatments are a critical tool on my farm. They protect seeds from early-season soil-borne pests at the most vulnerable stage of crop development. These pests are often not apparent until after damage has occurred, and farmers across Maryland have experienced **30–50% pre-emergent stand loss** in untreated fields. In soybeans, the majority of replanted acres in Maryland are from non-treated seed. Replanting alone costs **\$30–50 per acre in seed**, not including labor, fuel, and lost time. In corn, a **50% pre-emergent loss can result in approximately \$360 per acre in lost revenue**, which is a significant economic hit.

House Bill 91 would also severely limit my access to seed. Maryland's grain sector operates within a regional and national seed market. Seed companies do not custom treat seed for a single small state, and we have been explicitly told they will not special-treat and distribute seed for Maryland's **less than one million acres of grain and soybeans**. A prohibition on neonic-treated seed would significantly reduce the availability of competitively priced seed options and limit farmers' ability to select hybrids and varieties that meet specific field conditions. Additionally, seed for fall 2026 has already been purchased, and alternative untreated seed will not be readily available for spring 2027 and beyond.

Neonicotinoid seed treatments also support conservation practices on my farm. They allow me to implement **cover crops, reduced tillage, and no-till systems**, which are key components of climate-smart agriculture. Seed treatments are a targeted, preventative application method that reduces the need for later foliar spraying. Removing these tools would erode integrated pest management (IPM) systems and force farmers to rely on older, less precise chemistries that require more frequent applications and greater overall pesticide use.

In fact, banning neonicotinoid seed treatments would not reduce pesticide use. For every pound of neonicotinoids removed, nearly **five pounds of older organophosphate insecticides** would be required to achieve similar pest control.

These products are less effective, require additional spraying, and accelerate the development of pest resistance.

A **2020 Cornell University study** concluded that neonicotinoid seed treatments consistently increase net farm income, reduce crop damage, or provide superior pest control compared to likely alternatives. These products are also approved for use at the federal level by the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**, which is actively conducting a multi-year scientific review of neonicotinoids, including impacts to pollinators and endangered species. Any changes to allowed use should align with that federal, science-based process rather than preempt it at the state level and place Maryland farmers at a competitive disadvantage.

House Bill 91 would increase my costs, reduce yields, limit seed availability, and undermine conservation practices that are essential to my operation. For these reasons, 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,

**Brent Johnson**  
**Lyons Johnson Farms**  
**Talbot County, Maryland**