

Montgomery County Farm Bureau

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February 4, 2026

HB 91 - Agriculture - Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Prohibitions Environment & Transportation Committee Opposed

Environment & Transportation Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. Montgomery County Farm Bureau **opposes HB 91**.

A ban on selling or using neonicotinoid (neonic) treated corn, wheat and soybean seeds and prohibiting the use of neonic pesticides on turf grass will negatively impact the economic viability of Montgomery County farmers.

County farmers grow over 45,000 acres of corn, wheat, soybeans and barley that go to support Maryland's poultry industry on the Eastern Shore and other livestock production. They also grow over 1,000 acres of turfgrass for the region.

Seed treatment is an essential component of modern agriculture. A critical preventative crop protection tool in a grain farmer's toolbox. Crop protection is managing weeds, pests, diseases and environmental stress using science and practices to safeguard crops, achieve maximum yield, quality and food security. Seed treatment technology utilizes targeted, precise application that coats the seed for protection against diseases and pests during vulnerable early plant growth stages. Effectively reducing the need to apply insecticides over entire fields. An environmentally safer approach to managing crop health.

Seed treatment products are highly regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). They undergo thorough evaluation and rigorous testing. Neonics remain approved for use by the EPA, which is actively engaged in a multi-year scientific review of these products.

HB 91 will:

- Create undue financial hardship for farmers in already challenging times.
- Require farmers to address pest pressures with older, less efficient insecticides using other application methods with increased frequency and amounts. Replacing nearly five pounds of older chemistries for every pound of neonics removed from use. Products that are 8-10 times more expensive.
- Restrict corn, wheat and soybean production in the county and statewide due to the unavailability of non-treated seed from regional and national seed companies that will not specialize seed for a state with less than half a percent of nationwide grain acres.
- Severely limit the availability of competitively priced seed options in the region forcing farmers to purchase whatever seed is available increasing input costs. Possibly seed with lower yield potential.
- Undermine existing critical conservation practices like reduced tillage or no-till as farmers are forced to revert back to more conventional tillage for pest management increasing the risk of soil erosion.
- Put Maryland farmers at a disadvantage to farmers in surrounding states by preempting the EPA multi-year scientific review process.

Farmers use proven, science-based tools to protect their crops, the environment and their livelihoods. Not having those tools threatens the future of Maryland agriculture.

On behalf of Montgomery County Farm Bureau, I respectfully urge the Committee to **oppose HB 91**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Lechlida".

Doug Lechlida, President