



To: Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Jon Gaeta, RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment)

Date: February 4, 2026

RE: HB 91: Agriculture – Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Prohibitions

Position: OPPOSE

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to **HB 91**. RISE represents manufacturers, formulators, distributors, and other stakeholders involved in specialty pesticide and fertilizer products. Our organization advocates for policies grounded in sound science, risk-based decision-making, and responsible stewardship of pest management tools that protect public health, food security, and the environment.

RISE shares the Committee’s interest in protecting pollinators and beneficial insects. However, HB 91 would move Maryland away from established, science-based regulatory frameworks and toward broad, hazard-based restrictions that do not adequately consider real-world exposure, use patterns, or unintended consequences. Policies of this nature risk undermining public health protections and small business viability without clear evidence of corresponding environmental benefits.

Neonicotinoid pesticides are already subject to extensive regulation under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency conducts rigorous risk assessments to ensure registered products do not pose unreasonable risks to human health or the environment, and those reviews are ongoing. In addition, Maryland’s Department of Agriculture oversees the administration of pesticide laws and ensures the safe handling, use, and application of pesticides in the state. This layered regulatory system is designed to be science-driven, adaptive, and protective. HB 91 would override this framework with statutory restrictions that reduce regulatory flexibility and create inconsistency without improving safety outcomes.

Neonicotinoids also play an important role in protecting public health. These products are used to manage pests that spread serious diseases, including mosquitoes and ticks. Tick-borne illnesses remain a significant concern in Maryland, and limiting access to effective pest control tools—particularly for non-agricultural and structural uses—could reduce the ability of trained professionals to manage these risks. When effective tools are removed, pest pressures persist, often leading to increased reliance on older chemistries that may require more frequent applications and pose greater risks to humans and the environment.

Critically, there is no conclusive Maryland-specific data demonstrating that neonicotinoid use within the state is causing localized ecological harm sufficient to justify sweeping restrictions like those proposed in

HB 91. Pollinator declines and insect population changes in Maryland and across the East Coast are widely understood to be driven by multiple interacting factors, including habitat loss, climate change, disease, and parasites. Singularly focusing on one class of pesticides risks oversimplifying a complex issue and diverting attention from conservation strategies that would deliver more meaningful ecological benefits.

RISE strongly supports integrated pest management and pollinator-friendly practices, including education, habitat enhancement, and responsible product stewardship. These approaches work best when professionals retain access to a diverse pest management toolbox and can apply science-based judgment. Eliminating entire classes of products through legislation runs counter to integrated pest management principles and may ultimately increase environmental impacts rather than reduce them.

For these reasons, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment respectfully urges the Committee on Environment and Transportation to **oppose HB 91**. A more balanced and effective approach would strengthen habitat conservation efforts while continuing to rely on science-based regulatory systems that protect public health, agriculture, and environmental resources.

Sincerely,



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RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) is the national trade association representing manufacturers, formulators, distributors and other industry leaders engaged with specialty pesticides and fertilizers used by professionals and consumers.