

February 4, 2026

House Bill 91 - Agriculture - Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Prohibitions

Environment & Transportation Committee

Opposed

Jason Scott

Diamondback Farms, LLC

Dorchester County, MD

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

I am a farmer in Dorchester County, growing corn, soybeans, and small grains. I am also a seed salesman and utilize neonicotinoid products to treat my customer's corn and soybean seed. The ban on neonicotinoid treated seed for corn, soybeans and wheat in House Bill 91 would directly and 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 approximately 75% of my acres to protect my crops from insect pests. The only time I do not use them is when I am planting double crop soybeans because the later planting allows the crops to sprout and emerge without having to worry as much about insect pests.

Utilizing a neonicotinoid seed treatment is much like getting a vaccine. It is a preventative practice that cuts down on crop injury and the likelihood of replanting. In the event of insect feeding we can use foliar pesticides, but they are expensive and are much more likely to impact pollinators and the surrounding environment. Using foliar applications of neonicotinoids or other pesticides after the crops are out of the ground would cost me \$20-\$30 per acre compared to \$2-\$4 per acre as a seed treatment depending on the crop. 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 10 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 seed salesman I know that if neonicotinoids are banned that the only option we would have is completely untreated seed which doesn't even have a fungicide treatment. Lack of a fungicide would result in even more replanting and losses for farmers. 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. This would put Maryland farmers at an extreme disadvantage compared to the rest of our region.

Neonicotinoid seed treatments also support my conservation implementation. They allow me to plant over 1,200 acres of cover crops, and implement 1,500 acres of reduced tillage, and no-till by protecting vulnerable seedlings without repeated insecticide applications. Seed treatments are a targeted, preventative tool that reduce the need for later spraying. Taking away our preventative measures would push people away from the conservation tillage that Maryland farmers lead the nation in. This bill would undoubtedly cause more runoff and be detrimental to the quality of water in the Chesapeake Bay because we would be forced into more tillage to combat insect pests.

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 the state level 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 and our local environment 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,

Jason Scott

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