



# Maryland Native Plant Society

APPRECIATION CONSERVATION EDUCATION

**Testimony:** HB0091, Agriculture - Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Prohibitions  
**Committee:** Environment and Transportation  
**Hearing Date:** February 4, 2026  
**Position:** FAVORABLE

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

The Maryland Native Plant Society supports HB91, which prohibits the planting of corn, wheat and soybean seeds treated with neonicotinoids and prohibits the application of neonicotinoid pesticides on ornamental plants and turf.

Many native plants, as well as agricultural food crops and home vegetable gardens, depend on pollinators for reproduction.<sup>1</sup> In fact, about one-third of the food we eat and about three-quarters of our flowering plants depend on pollinators to set fruit and reproduce.<sup>2</sup> Further, a recent study documented soybean yield increases of over 20% when native bees and honeybees help to pollinate the crop.<sup>3</sup>

Neonicotinoid insecticides are now the most widely used class of insecticides in the world, and they have had devastating ecological impacts. Neonicotinoids are systemic chemicals absorbed into a plant's vascular system and are present in pollen and nectar, making them toxic to pollinators that feed on them. Most persist in the environment for months after application; so timing applications to avoid bloom periods is not effective to avoid harm to pollinators. The widespread use of neonicotinoid insecticides and the fact that they are water-soluble means we now find neonicotinoids in soil and water samples throughout our country. The use of neonicotinoid-coated seeds for corn, wheat and soy crops releases a toxic dust during the planting process that contaminates the soil at the planting site and nearby water bodies, and can also drift on wind currents to other non-target sites harming honey bees, native bees, butterflies, and other pollinators critical for plant pollination and reproduction.<sup>4</sup>

Pollinator populations continue to decline due to a combination of factors, including habitat loss, climate change, disease, and the use of pesticides. Of these stressors, pesticide use is the most easily controlled. The prophylactic use of pesticides such as neonic-coated seeds should be eliminated, with pesticide-use decisions based instead on the results of pest monitoring.<sup>5</sup>

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Neonicotinoid pesticides harm not only pollinators, but also other agriculturally and environmentally important beneficial invertebrates such as predatory lady beetles and parasitoid wasps. These beneficial insects provide natural pest suppression on farms and in landscapes. One study has conservatively valued this “ecosystem service” at more than \$4.5 billion annually in the U.S.<sup>6</sup>

We understand that when balancing the need for food production with the conservation of biodiversity, there may always be some impacts on nontarget wildlife. However, if too many pollinators, beneficial insects, and soil invertebrates are lost, we threaten the ecosystem services upon which food production depends. “Uses of neonicotinoids that result in little or no pest management are counter-productive and pose an unacceptable risk to the health of land on which we all depend.”<sup>7</sup>

**The Maryland Native Plant Society urges a favorable report on HB91.**

Respectfully,

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<sup>1</sup> University of Maryland Extension. Accessed 2/1/26. Pollinators and Pesticides.

<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/pollinators-and-pesticides/>

<sup>2</sup> Hill & Furrow. 2022. Pollinators in soybean production- Are you in the know? Illinois Extension, College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences, College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences.

<https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/hill-and-furrow/2022-05-27-pollinators-soybean-production-are-you-know>

<sup>3</sup> L. Garibaldi, et al. 2021. Time to Integrate Pollinator Science into Soybean Production. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2021.03.013>

<sup>4</sup> Department of Legislative Services, Office of Policy Analysis. 2015. Pollinator Health and the Use of Neonicotinoids in Maryland. Annapolis, MD.

<https://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NatRes/Pollinator-Health-and-the-Use-of-Neonics-in-MD-Rpt-Oct-2015.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Xerces Society. Accessed 2/1/26. Understanding Neonicotinoids.

<https://www.xerces.org/pesticides/understanding-neonicotinoids>

<sup>6</sup> Losey, J.E., and M. Vaughan. 2006. The economic value of ecological services provided by insects. *Bioscience* 56:311-323.

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<sup>7</sup> J. Hopwood, Black S. H., Vaughan, M., Lee-Mader, E. Beyond the Birds and the Bees. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. 2013.

[https://xerces.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/13-049\\_01\\_XercesSoc\\_Beyond-the-Birds%2Bthe-Bees\\_web.pdf](https://xerces.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/13-049_01_XercesSoc_Beyond-the-Birds%2Bthe-Bees_web.pdf)