



February 5, 2014

Dear Respected Member of Parliament,

Neonicotinoid Insecticides:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists (KWFN) and wish to state our concern about the use of neonicotinoids and their detrimental effect on wildlife. The KWFN is a non-profit association that promotes conservation and protection of significant natural areas and strives to educate its members on local natural history and conservation.

We have been witnessing a rise in concern over the widespread use of neonicotinoids on crop seeds, both locally and throughout the world. Their use has now been scientifically linked to the decline in economically vital pollinator bee populations but also other insects (Goulson, 2013) and even birds (Mineau & Palmer 2013). Even more critically, the mechanisms of how these neonicotinoids affect insects is being understood (DiPrisco et al 2013). Further, the persistence of these poisons in soil, and their solubility in water, combined with their cumulative and non-reversible effects on insects and other animals should be cause for extreme caution. Use is spreading to non-agricultural activities, such as ornamental flower production, and to retail pesticide formulations.

The European Union has been sufficiently convinced of the link as to impose a ban on neonics, despite the court actions of Syngenta, Bayer and BASF. As these companies produce, market and sell these insecticides, they have a strong profit interest in their promotion. However, to allow corporate interests to dominate over the health of wildlife, ecosystems, and ultimately ourselves is naïve and dangerous. We believe a precautionary policy of 'Better Safe than Sorry' is necessary in these circumstances.

The consequences of neonicotinoids go far beyond a reduced supply of honey at the local farmer's market. Bees are critical pollinators for many agricultural crops, so their well-being is intricately linked to our own food supply. Even trace amounts of neonicotinoids impact these species. As for bird species that are higher in the food web, the potential damage to their populations makes an eerie comparison to DDT and its subsequent ban.

Please consider introducing or supporting regulations or legislation that suspends the use of neonicotinoids until we understand how to manage the risks posed by these products so that the health of our planet does not take a back seat to corporate interests.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Buschert

Conservation Director  
KW Field Naturalists

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Gennaro Di Prisco, Valeria Cavaliere, Desiderato Annoscia, Paola Varricchio, Emilio Caprio, Francesco Nazzi, Giuseppe Gargiulo, and Francesco Pennacchio. *Neonicotinoid clothianidin adversely affects insect immunity and promotes replication of a viral pathogen in honey bees*. Biological Sciences - Applied Biological Sciences: PNAS 2013 ; published ahead of print October 21, 2013

Goulson, Dave. *An overview of the environmental risks posed by neonicotinoid insecticides*. Journal of Applied Ecology, Stirling, UK. 2013.

Mineau, Pierre, and Cynthia Palmer. *The Impact of the Nation's Most Widely Used Insecticides on Birds*. American Bird Conservancy. 2013. 98 p.