



Office of State Representative Carolyn C. Dykema

8th Middlesex District

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H.4041, An Act protecting Massachusetts pollinators

Sponsor: Rep. Carolyn Dykema



Committee: House Committee on Ways and Means

Co-sponsors: 134



The Issue:

In the last decade, declining pollinator health, specifically among honeybee and wild bee populations, has been a cause for concern both in Massachusetts and around the country. In 2015, Massachusetts beekeepers reported a **55.8 percent annual loss** in colony numbers.

There are many hypotheses in the scientific community as to why the decline in pollinator health has been so rapid and severe. A combination of factors, including decreased biodiversity, limited availability of forage, and climate change, have been cited as contributing to colony loss. Many scientists and beekeepers have identified the introduction of **neonicotinoid pesticides** as a primary reason for pollinator health decline.

Neonicotinoids are relatively new class of insecticides that, since their discovery in the 1980s, have become the most widely used insecticide worldwide. In a 2017 sample of honey from around the world, **75 percent of samples from six continents** contained a quantifiable amount of at least one neonicotinoid. Neonics are systemic pesticides: once sprayed or coated on seed, the chemical is taken up into plant tissue and can remain in plants and soil long after application.

Many peer-reviewed scientific studies have indicated negative health impacts on both managed and wild pollinators. A 2017 study published in *Science* magazine found a **24 percent decrease** in worker bee populations after neonic exposure, and a Canadian study of honeybee populations located near neonic-treated cornfields reported a mortality rate **3.51 times higher** than normal.

What this bill would do:

- Restricts sale and use of neonicotinoid pesticides to licensed applicators as determined by the Department of Agriculture (Sections 5, 6, 7)
- Restricts application of neonicotinoid pesticides during the blooming season to agricultural and horticultural use only (Section 6)
 - Exemptions: Pet care products, indoor pest control products, structural pest control products
- Requires notification of property owners of the risks of neonicotinoids to pollinators prior to application by a licensed user (Section 6)
- Directs UMass and MDAR to develop training and informational materials associated with training and notification (Section 9, 11)
- Directs MassDOT to consider the opportunities for installation of native forage on department-owned property in the place of turf grass (Section 10)

For more information, contact:

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Bill History:

190th session: Filed as H.2113/S.164 (Rep. Dykema/Sen. Eldridge). Advanced favorably by the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture in November 2017.

189th session: Filed as H.655 in 2015-2016. Advanced favorably by the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture in 189th session, no further action by HWM.

Who is impacted by this bill and how:

I am a:	Able to continue using neonics?	Limitations on use?
Farmer with an applicator license	Yes.	Must use neonics only for agricultural purposes during blooming season.
Farmer without an applicator license	No. You must become licensed or employ a commercial applicator.	See requirements on licensed applicators.
Commercial pesticide applicator	Yes.	Must notify landowners when spraying neonics. Must use neonics only for agricultural or horticultural purposes during blooming season.
Landscaper or lawn care professional	Yes, if licensed.	May not use neonics for lawn care during blooming season.
Structural pest management professional	Yes, on indoor/structural use only.	Exempt from blooming season restrictions.
Flower grower and/or retailer	Yes, if licensed.	May not sell neonic pesticides but may continue to sell neonic-treated plants.
Garden/home retailer	No.	May not sell to unlicensed consumers.
Homeowner/consumer	No. You must seek alternative products or hire a licensed professional.	Must hire a licensed applicator.
Pet owner	You may continue to purchase and use pet care products that contain neonics.	None.

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