H.4041 - An Act to Protect Massachusetts Pollinators

MASSACHUSETTS BEES ARE DYING AT AN ALARMING RATE, AND THE STATE MUST ACT NOW.

- United States beekeepers have reported average hive losses of 30 percent or higher each year since 2006. This past year beekeepers lost an average of 44% of their colonies.
- From 2015-2016 Massachusetts beekeepers lost an average of 55.75 percent of their hives. These numbers are **NOT sustainable**.[2]
- The U.N. estimates that 40 percent of invertebrate pollinators, especially bees and butterflies, face extinction.[3]

WHY SHOULD WE CARE? NO BEES, NO FOOD.

- Honeybees are responsible for 1 in every 3 bites of food we eat.[4]
- They are integral to the production of some of our most nutritious and delicious foods such as almonds, apples, cranberries and blueberries.
- Pollinators contribute more than $24 billion to the U.S. economy.[5]
- Between $235 billion and $577 billion worth of annual global food production relies on direct contributions by pollinators.[6]
- Massachusetts pollinators support the state agriculture industry, which produces approximately $492 million in agricultural products annually.[7]

NEONICOTINOIDS CONTRIBUTE TO POLLINATOR DECLINE.

- A growing body of research points to neonicotinoids (neonics), a class of insecticides, as a leading cause of bee decline.
- Neonics can kill bees outright and even low levels of these pesticides can cause serious harm by impairing bees' ability to learn, find their way back to their hive, collect food, reproduce and increases their susceptibility to diseases.[8,9]
- In September 2017, the Task Force on Systemic Pesticides released a follow-up study to a 2015 meta-study on neonicotinoids and systemic insecticides, finding neonicotinoids pose a major threat to global biodiversity and ecosystems. The Task Force called for a halt to all agricultural uses of these pesticides.[10]

THE PRESENCE OF NEONICOTINOID PESTICIDES IS PERVASIVE AND USE IS WIDESPREAD.

- Neonics are one of the most commonly used insecticides in the world.[11]
- They contaminate our water and our soil, persisting for months to even years in our environment.[12]
- Consumers often overuse neonics. One study found that products approved for home and garden use may be applied at up to 120 times higher rates than what is approved for agricultural uses.[13]

For more information on the bill, including more research on how neonics harm bees and other pollinators – please contact Tiffany Finck-haynes, Senior Food Futures Campaigner at Friends of the Earth at tfinckhaynes@foe.org.

MASSACHUSETTS IS IN A POSITION TO FIGHT BACK.

- More than 67 percent of the legislature is a co-sponsor of the bill and it has bi-partisan support.
- The bill would ensure that consumers could no longer purchase neonicotinoid pesticides. They would be available for sale ONLY to certified applicators.
- Certified applicators would be limited in the time they could use them and the bill would set up parameters for education and training of licensed users.
- More than 150 businesses, states, municipalities, federal agencies and universities have taken steps to restrict neonicotinoids.
- The EU halted use of the most widely used neonics in 2013, and the UK's Environment Secretary is backing a full ban.[14]
- In November 2016, Health Canada proposed a ban on almost all uses of the neonicotinoid imidacloprid, saying it is seeping into Canadian waterways at levels that can harm insects and the ecosystem.[15]
- Lower-toxicity alternatives exist that can replace neonics for common uses.[16]

TAKE ACTION:

PASS H.4041 - AN ACT TO PROTECT MASSACHUSETTS POLLLINATORS

Friends of the Earth

[1] https://beeinformed.org/results/colony-loss-2015-2016-preliminary-results/
[2] https://bip2.beeinformed.org/geo/
[3] http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/384726/icode/
[4] http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/274/1608/303
[5] https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/20/fact-sheet-economic-challenge-posed-declining-pollinator-populations
[6] http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/384726/icode/
[7] http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/agr/facts/snapshot-of-ma-agriculture.pdf
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[12] https://ca.water.usgs.gov/pubs/2014/HladikKolpinKuivila2014.pdf
[13] http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Are-Neonicotinoids-Killing-Bees_Xerces-Society1.pdf
[14] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:139:0012:0026:EN:PDF
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[16] http://www.mdpestnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Neonics-alternatives-handout.pdf