

# 2016 Pollinator Protection Act (SB 198 / HB 211)



## FACT SHEET

*Research confirms that toxic **neonicotinoid pesticides** (aka “neonics”) kill and harm bees and other pollinators, like butterflies and birds – posing a serious threat to our food supply, public health and environment.*

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

*In 2015, Maryland beekeepers lost a staggering 61 percent of their hives.*



*That's about twice the national average and far more than is typical in a year.*

- Since 2006, beekeepers have lost an average of 30 percent of their hives.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2014, the Task Force on Systemic Pesticides – a group of global, independent scientists studying the impact of pesticides – reviewed more than 1100 peer-reviewed studies and concluded that neonics are a key factor in bee declines and also harm other essential organisms. Their report also called for immediate regulatory action to restrict neonics.<sup>2</sup>
- In addition to killing bees outright, research shows that even low levels of these toxic pesticides cause serious harm by impairing bees' ability to learn, find their way back to the hive, collect food, produce new queens and mount an effective immune response.
- Just one seed coated in neonics is enough to kill a song bird, according to the American Bird Conservancy.
- University of Minnesota [research](#) shows that butterfly larvae feeding on neonic-contaminated milkweed plants died soon thereafter, and neonic-treated plants in backyards near milkweed plants create serious potential risks to monarchs and other butterfly species.

## WHY SHOULD WE CARE? NO BEES, NO FOOD.

- Our food supply depends on these pollinators. Honey bees and other pollinators are responsible for one out of every three bites of food we eat.
- Maryland honeybee pollination directly supports the agriculture industry in the state and is valued at more than \$26 million, annually.
- Neonics harm aquatic life and have been linked to death of molting blue crabs.<sup>4</sup>
- A growing body of research shows that neonics threaten public health. Some neonics may affect the developing human nervous system,<sup>5</sup> as well as potentially increase the risk of cancer, reproductive harm and endocrine disruption.<sup>6</sup>



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## THE PRESENCE OF NEONIC PESTICIDES IS PERVASIVE AND THEIR USE IS WIDESPREAD.

- Neonics are one of the most widely used class of insecticides – and that use continues to grow. Neonicotinoids and fipronil currently account for approximately one third (in monetary terms in 2010) of the world insecticide market ([Simon-Delso et al. 2014](#)).
- Consumers often overuse neonics. One [study](#) found that products approved for home and garden use may be applied at up to 120 higher rates than what is approved for agricultural uses.
- Consumers may be unaware that many “bee friendly” garden plants and vegetable seedlings, sold at home garden centers have been pre-treated with these bee-killing pesticides. More than half of “bee-friendly” plants purchased at Home Depot, Walmart and Lowes stores in 18 cities across the US and Canada, including in Maryland, had levels of neonicotinoids, at sufficient levels to kill bees outright, according to 2014 recent Friends of the Earth [study](#).
- A November 2015 United States Geological Survey study found residue from one of three types of neonics in a majority of bees sampled.<sup>7</sup>
- Another USGS study found 59 percent of all streams sampled nationwide had detectable levels of neonic contamination – including sampling from the Chesapeake Bay watershed.<sup>8</sup>

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## WHAT DOES THE RECENTLY PASSED POLLINATOR PROTECTION ACT DO FOR MARYLAND?

- The Pollinator Protection Act, which becomes effective in 2018, ensures that consumers could no longer purchase neonicotinoid pesticides. They would be available for sale ONLY to certified applicators, farmers or veterinarians.
- More than 20 states, municipalities, federal agencies and universities have taken steps to restrict neonicotinoids.
- Lower-toxicity [alternatives](#) exist that can replace neonics for common uses.
- Marylanders overwhelmingly support these measures. In a 2015 survey, 78 percent of Maryland voters favored restricting consumer use of this type of pesticides.



For more information on the bill – and for more research on how neonics harm bees and other pollinators – please visit

[www.smartonpesticides.org](http://www.smartonpesticides.org)

The [Smart on Pesticides Maryland](#) coalition works to protect Marylanders and the natural systems we depend upon from the toxic impacts of pesticides. The coalition includes more than 75 organizations, and institutions representing communities, businesses, health care providers, farmers, environmentalists, Waterkeepers, interfaith congregants as well as environmental justice, public health and wildlife advocates.

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1 [http://libcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/93/4b/3/4908/Bees\\_in\\_Trouble.pdf](http://libcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/93/4b/3/4908/Bees_in_Trouble.pdf)  
2 <http://www.tfsp.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/WIA-PR-REL.pdf>  
3 [http://libcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/93/4b/3/4908/Bees\\_in\\_Trouble.pdf](http://libcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/93/4b/3/4908/Bees_in_Trouble.pdf)  
4 <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022098112001694>

5 <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/131217>  
6 [http://docs.nrdc.org/health/files/hea\\_16011101a.pdf](http://docs.nrdc.org/health/files/hea_16011101a.pdf)  
7 <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969715308937>  
8 [http://toxics.usgs.gov/highlights/2015-08-18-national\\_neonics.html](http://toxics.usgs.gov/highlights/2015-08-18-national_neonics.html)