

**Written Testimony Regarding Bill 688  
Agriculture, Pesticides, Pollinator Protection; Neonicotinoid Pesticides.**

To: Linda Leehman, Assistant, Committee on Agriculture...  
Carolyn Partridge, Chairwoman, Committee on Agriculture...

Submitted by: Jane Sorensen  
Member, Vermont Pollinator Protection Committee  
Farmer, River Berry Farm  
Owner and Manager, Northeast Pollinator Plants  
UVM Adjunct, Dept. Plant and Soil Science  
VT Licensed Landscape Architect  
MLA, Harvard University, BSLA, Pennsylvania State University

Date: 2 February 2018

**Bill H.688**, as introduced, is laudable and ambitious in the intent to reduce harm to pollinators. However, I fear the bill, as presented, **will meet large opposition by ornamental greenhouse, plant nursery, landscape maintenance and golf course maintenance industries.**

I recommend the bill be revised to **focus only on the restriction of neonicotinoid pesticides to Class A applicators.** Application rates for home gardeners result in 10 – 120 times the concentration of neonicotinoid pesticides, and that is assuming the home applicator actually follows the application rates. I would hope the ornamental AND agricultural aspects could be addressed in future and separate bill(s) and reduce the risk of losing this extremely important first step of restricting neonicotinoid pesticides to Class A applicators.

**Should the committee have an appetite to pursue the other measures** presented in H.688, I recommend the following revisions and/or clarifications indicated by underlined text:

1105(a) A person shall not apply neonicotinoid pesticides to ornamental plants that are attractive to pollinators in the State.

ADD: A person shall not import or make available for purchase in the State ornamental plants that are attractive to pollinators that have been treated with neonicotinoid pesticides prior to entering the State.

**OR ADD:** Any plant attractive to pollinators that has been treated with neonicotinoid pesticides prior to entering the State and available for purchase shall be clearly labeled as such.

**AND RECOMMEND YOU ASK FOR TESTIMONIES OF INDUSTRIES THAT WOULD BE IMPACTED BY RESTRICTIONS ON NEONICOTINOID PESTICIDES ON ORNAMENTAL PLANTS:**

- ORNAMENTAL PLANT NURSERIES, - CHRIS CONANT OF CLAUSSEN'S GREENHOUSE AND A MEMBER OF THE VT POLL. PROT. COMM.
- GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT SERVICES -KEVIN KOMER, VT GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT'S ASSOCIATION (TESTIFIED TO V
- LANDSCAPE MAINTNENANCE COMPANY REPRESENATIVE (I DO NOT HAVE A RECOMMENDATION FOR THIS AREA).

1105(b) ~~A person shall only apply neonicotinoid pesticides in the State for the purposes of farming.~~ *Keep the 50' buffer from pollinator foraging area language, however, the definition of "pollinator foraging area" in 1101(11) DEFINITIONS includes "or fruit trees"(B) land that is planted or cultivate, or both..." This suggests an orchard could be considered a pollinator foraging area, hence I would recommend removing the (B) section from the definition.*

ADD: A person shall not apply neonicotinoid pesticides to turf unless mowing regiment can assure no exposure of flowers attractive to pollinators in the turf for one year past treatment.

***The practice and scale of prophylactic planting treated seeds for corn and soybean in the State is disconcerting and is addressed in this bill via offering education and alternatives. I support the development of a future bill that follows the recommendation of the Vermont Pollinator Protections Committee, that received a "split opinion – favorable" vote that states: "The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets will use its regulatory authority of treated articles to develop best management practices (BMPs) on planting treated corn/soybean seed starting as soon as possible. They will not be permitted unless a quantifiable demonstrated need can be identified by scouting techniques."***

And finally, I highly recommend members of the Committee reviewing Bill H.688 read the Executive Summary and review figures 6.1-1 and 6.1-2 on pages 38 and 39, respectively, of *How Neonicotinoids Can Kill Bees, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, by Hopwood, et. al, of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, to more thoroughly understand the impact of neonicotinoid pesticides on pollinators.

[http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/HowNeonicsCanKillBees\\_XercesSociety\\_Nov2016.pdf](http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/HowNeonicsCanKillBees_XercesSociety_Nov2016.pdf)

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Sorensen