



TO: Senator Robert Starr

Cc: Senate Committee on Agriculture

DATE: April 12, 2022

RE: H.626 An act relating to the sale, use, or application of neonicotinoid pesticides

The Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance opposes H.626 as we believe this is redundant and the Ag Innovation Board could take up this issue. The legislature created the Agriculture Innovation Board in 2021 to tackle the big issues facing the agriculture sector, as well as the environment. To date, the Board has only met once and they plan to report back to the legislature regarding issues such as pollinator health, therefore, we see this bill as premature. If passed, that bill will further limit farmers in an already tough time in farming.

Treated seeds allow corn to get an early start and protect against pests and diseases, which increases yield potential and decreases the chance for needing to replant. Replanting is costly and causes additional trips over the field which can create soil compaction. This could lead to reduced water retention, and an increased risk of runoff events, as well as lowering the yield potential significantly as shorter day varieties are needed for replants. As you may know, there is a large corn shortage world-wide, as China has switched feeding processes with the swine herd and has increased their corn imports. This leaves little room for error and treated seeds are the safest way to ensure sustainable crop production.

The agriculture community is constantly improving and innovating to meet the ever-changing challenges. This bill would add costs, cause a loss of crops, and in turn, trigger lost revenue. We all know our farmers cannot afford these unnecessary and burdensome regulations, particularly at this time.

As you heard from seed dealers, for Vermont farms to get these seeds in the ground on time, they would need to be ordered extremely early, with notice, as some dealers have no untreated seed in stock. If a farmer switches to an untreated seed, to keep the plant viable, it is likely other pesticide methods would need to be used to keep the crop usable for feed. Those other methods could be using outdated practices or reversing the technology to ensure crop production and end up being far worse than using the treated seed.

We ask the Committee to wait for the Ag Innovation Board's findings before imposing new regulation on farmers.

Respectfully,

Brian Carpenter; Chair

The Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance (VDPA) is comprised of dairy farmers of all sizes, as well as partners of the farming industry. We believe that pollinator health is very important, and we support the efforts. However, we would like to work in tandem with members, industry partners, and State government to adopt regulations that will not hinder crop production.