

# Hello,

My name is Sylvia Knight. I live in Burlington.

I am writing to communicate my support for a just transition *away from* neonicotinoid pesticides, and to urge you to support amendments on the Senate floor to H.706 which bring the bill into greater alignment with the version passed by the House.

This is an important bill for the health and equity of our farming community and food systems, as well as for pollinators and the greater environment.

Particular changes made in the Senate Committee on Agriculture are concerning and compromise the effectiveness of this legislation. It's important to work to restore the bill to its House-passed form while not compromising its passage. Important changes that I'd like to see made on the Senate floor, and / or once the bill returns to the House, include:

- Restoring the implementation date to 2029 in alignment with NY state and the Champlain Valley Farmers Coalition;
- Remove the exemption for golf courses and turf management. Golf courses do not need neonics. Use reports from golf courses for 2021 indicate that they are using almost no neonics and replacing them with chlorantraniliprole. The 25-ft buffer required by golf pesticide permits is not sufficient to keep the pesticides out of streams and lakes downstream.

This bill is important to me because it acknowledges and faces the significant negative biological effects of neonics, their persistence and mobility in the environment. I am concerned about pollinators AND aquatic organisms and aquatic food chains downstream in Lake Champlain. Neonics have contaminated the lake at 5 points along VT's shoreline from uses upstream, according to 2021 data from US Geological Services.

H.706 provides time and support for those using the pesticide to transition to new practices. But the Legislature needs to protect the vast majority of VT's farmers and community members who are choosing *not* to use the pesticide from exposure and impact. Some *are currently exposed* without their consent, given what we know about the spread of neonics in the environment away from the immediate location of use, and their far reaching and systemic impacts.

The work to limit the use of and exposure to neonics in VT is not new. There is precedent for neonic phase-out and transition - very similar to this legislation - in the European Union, in Ontario, in Québec. Now New York has passed legislation that will phase out treated

seed and other uses by 2029. Data and farmer testimony from those regions which have transitioned has shown *little to no impact* on crop yields or farm economics.

Please support reasonable and important amendments to H.706 bringing it more in line with the House-passed version, and work to assure its passage on the Senate Floor.

Thank you for your attention and work.

Sylvia Knight

Earth Community Advocate & Researcher

Burlington, VT 05408

[sknightinv73@gmail.com](mailto:sknightinv73@gmail.com)

pronouns: she, her

We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them. Albert Einstein.