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April 8, 2024

Senate Committee on Agriculture
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Re: Bill H.706 – Banning Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides (Neonics)

Dear Chairman Starr, Vice Chairman Collamore, and Committee Members,

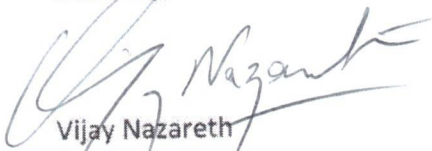
The Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition (CVFC), representing over 75 diversified farms in Addison and Chittenden County, has been a strong driver of economic growth and environmental stewardship in the state of Vermont. We understand that this is a difficult issue before the Committee but we believe that finding compromise is in everyone's best interest.

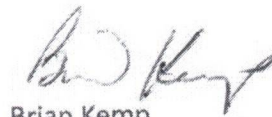
We therefore propose that the Committee adopt language in H.706 consistent with the Birds the Bees Protection Act passed by Gov Kathy Hochul of New York in December 2023. The language in the New York bill protects pollinators, addresses environmental concerns, and provides a safety net for farmers as they transition to alternative seed and seed treatments.

Our members have concerns relating to the availability of untreated seed (quantity and variety), the need for additional research on alternative seed and seed treatments, access to crop insurance if farmers were to incur pest-related losses, and the possibility of incurring higher costs if they were to switch out of neonic treated seed. The New York bill allows a five-year timeframe for these issues to be addressed, which we think is appropriate.

We thank the Committee for its consideration.

Sincerely,


Vijay Nazareth
Executive Director
CVFC


Brian Kemp
President
CVFC