

HARTFORD FOOD SYSTEM

To the State of Connecticut Senate, Environment Committee:

I am the farm manager for the non-profit Hartford Food System. Hartford Food System is a non-profit that is dedicated to finding long-term solutions for access to affordable and healthy food in the city of Hartford. I am writing in support of Bill No. 231, An Act Concerning Pollinator Health. This bill will play an important role in protecting Connecticut's agricultural businesses and securing the future against catastrophic practices that negatively impact our environment. By limiting usage of neonicotinoids during the blooming season, we will be able to preserve the region's agricultural landscape and viability for future generations.

Between April 2014 and April 2015, U.S. beekeepers lost about 42 percent of honey bee colonies. Research has confirmed that bees exposed to neonicotinoids experience a number of adverse effects, which impair the overall health of the hive, including disorientation and difficulty foraging, and navigating back to the hive, impaired memory, learning, and ability to communicate reduction in breeding, and immune suppression. This loss in pollinators is problematic as they play an important role in the economic viability of farms. Upholding the practice of allowing neonicotinoid usage is disastrous for those who rely on farms as their primary means of income.

Limiting the usage of neonicotinoids during a period when pollinators use them the most, during the blooming season, will help to protect these species against harmful pesticides. Other aspects of this bill will make it clear for both pesticide applicators and consumers aware of the harmful effects of neonicotinoids. Consumers will also be able to know whether the food they purchase is produced using neonicotinoids and pesticides that are harmful for pollinator populations. This approach will help to spread wider awareness of the importance of pollinators and responsible agricultural practices.

This bill provides basic tools for a common sense approach to pollinator health and is necessary for the preservation of Connecticut agriculture. Everyone is impacted by a healthy pollinator population from our farmers to our families. It is time to take action to ensure that we protect our environment for future generations.

Sincerely,



Dan Gregory
Farm Manger, Grow Hartford