

# Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-963

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING NEONICOTINOIDS FOR NON-AGRICULTURAL USE.

**Vote Date:** 3/10/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/15/2023

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Environment Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

To prohibit the nonagricultural use of neonicotinoids.

## **Substitute Language-LCO 5740**

Prohibits use other than on invasive invertebrate insects and agricultural plants. Application on such insects and plants requires determination by DSSP/CAES that there is no other alternative than to use product.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner, Department of Energy & Environmental Protection**

DEEP supports the concept of SB 963 because we recognize the importance of pollinator conservation and the key ecosystem services they provide, but they do have concerns with some of the language. The language should also exempt the use of neonicotinoids to control non-native, invasive insect outbreaks. This lack of an exemption could hamper DEEPs ability to quickly and effectively address an outbreak.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Lori Brown, Executive Director, CT League of Conservation Voters**

CT League of Conservation Voters supports SB 963 because Neonics are a neurotoxic pesticide linked to massive bee and insect losses around the globe and increasingly to vast water and soil contamination, ecosystem-wide harms, and human health concerns. They also recommend expanding the language to include neonic-coated seeds.

**Alicea Charamut, Executive Director, Rivers Alliance of CT**

The Rivers Alliance of CT supports SB963 to prohibit the use of Neonicotinoids for non-agricultural use that will keep Connecticut at the forefront of states that take action to protect its citizens and environment. Pesticides are an endocrine disruptor that can cause abnormalities in fish, frogs and salamanders and impact aquatic invertebrates.

**Ann Gadwah, Advocacy and Outreach Organizer, Sierra Club Connecticut**

Sierra Club supports SB963. Neonicotinoids are the most widely used insecticides in the world and have made agriculture 48 times more harmful to insects and they permeate plants turning their nectar, pollen and fruit toxic.

**Ricard Harris, Marine Scientist for East Norwalk Blue**

Mr. Harris supports SB963. Neonics have proven to very soluble and can easily migrate through soils to water supplies and ultimately to Long Island Sound.

**Wendolyn Hill, Town of Lyme**

Wendolyn supports SB963. Neonicotinoids have an impact on pollinating insects and have a potentially long-lasting presence in plants because they are absorbed into the plant.

**Robert LaFrance, Director of Policy, Audubon Connecticut**

The Audubon Society supports the intent of SB963 to reduce exposure to the environment of neonicotinoids and they especially support the expanded utilization of the Pesticide Advisory Council as an appropriate entity to assist in making recommendations concerning neonicotinoids and other pesticides.

**Susan Pronovost, Executive Director, Connecticut Greenhouse Growers Association**

They support the restriction of neonicotinoids for purchase or application for non-agricultural purposes, but they support continued access to these chemicals – which are essential to production agriculture – for licensed applicators in the State of Connecticut, for agricultural purposes only.

**Kimberly Stoner, PhD, Agricultural Scientist Emerita and the Chair of the Pollinator Advisory Committee, CT Agricultural Experiment Station**

They support the goal of SB963 to prohibit the general use of neonicotinoids, as currently defined in the state statutes, for non-agricultural use, primarily on lawns and ornamental landscapes. However, they propose alternative language that would make provisions in cases where these insecticides may be the most effective treatment option for certain invasive invertebrate pests that threaten to become serious pests, for species under state or federal quarantine, or in case of an environmental pest emergency.

**Bill Lucy, Long Island Soundkeeper, Save the Sound**

Save the Sound supports SB963 because bans on non-agricultural use of neonicotinoid pesticides would keep them from washing into our waterways. They are especially damaging to aquatic insects which form the food base for our fisheries.

Several speakers sent in testimony in support of SB 963 An Act Concerning Neonicotinoids for Nonagricultural Use. They believe it is an important targeted step to reduce the use of these neurotoxic pesticides that have a devastating impact on pollinators and contaminate CT waterways and the environment:

**Elizabeth Dempsey, Conservation Coalition**

**Melanie, Pollinator Pathway Stamford**

**Annie Hornish, CT State Director, Humane Society**

**Emily Keating, Conservation Committee, CT Ornithological Assoc.**

**Tara Littman, CT Pesticide Reform**

**Connie Manes, Executive Director, Kent Land Trust**

**Louis Memoli, Brookfield Pollinator Pathway**

**Scott Smith, Communications Director, Friends of Animals**

**Jay Feldman, Executive Director, Beyond Pesticides**

**Theresa Valenzas, Citizens for Pesticides Reform**

**Louise Washer, Pollinator Pathway**

**Anne Hulick, Connecticut Director, Clean Water Action**

**Over 100 Connecticut Residents submitted testimony in Support of SB 963**

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Jon Gaeta, Director, State Affairs, RISE, Riley Titus, Director, State Government Affairs, CropLife America**

Both RISE and CropLife America oppose SB963. There is an existing regulatory process in place for changes or modifications to pesticides. The bill would undermine this existing regulatory process, and expertise and authority of DEEP and EPA, agencies qualified and equipped for review and evaluation of pesticide products.

**Anthony Giovanni, Director Connecticut Pest Control Association**

The Connecticut Pest Control Association opposes SB963 even though it exempts indoor use for our industry. They ask amending the language to include "and outdoor structural" on line 15 after the word "indoor".

**Dustyn Nelson, Connecticut Nursery & Landscape Association**

Mr. Nelson opposes SB 963. Neonicotinoids are already designated a restricted use, which limits their access to trained professionals certified by the state, who understand and minimize risks associated with their use. Integrated Pest Management is the Best Management Practice utilized by pest control professionals, using chemical control as the last resort. A way to protect pollinators is to expand and improve pollinator habitats, including adding pollinator-friendly plants to medians and shoulders of state highways to create pollinator pathways.

**Joan Nichols, Executive Director, CT Farm Bureau Association**

The CT Farm Bureau Association appreciates the exemption for agricultural uses but if this were to pass as written, neonicotinoid insecticides would not be available for use by turf managers of golf courses. Neonicotinoids were developed to replace older classes of insecticides because they are much safer and pose less exposure risk to both humans and non-target organisms.

**George Foran, Tree Warden, Town of Glastonbury**

Mr. Foran opposes SB 963 because as a Connecticut licensed arborist, he sees the removal of neonicotinoids as detrimental to the urban forest and the environment. The loss of canopy cover, without these insecticides, would be devastating to the urban forest and to some of our most special public trees. Please protect tools the arborists need to do jobs preserving trees and the ecosystem.

**Eric Kundahl, Superintendent, Norwich Golf Course**

Mr. Kundahl opposes SB 963. The Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents is a organization of professional dedicated to environmental stewardship, minimizing the impact of their operations, and maximizing the economic and ecological benefits golf courses contribute to their communities. He believes we should wait because the products included in SB 963, are currently in the final stages of review by the EPA as part of the regulatory framework established under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.

Several speakers sent in testimony in opposition to SB 963. They feel that Neonicotinoids are extremely valuable chemical class whose benefits far outweigh any risks associated with current use. The 2016 Pollinator Protection Act designated these products as "Restricted Use" limited access to trained and licensed professionals. These licensed professionals utilize Best Practices to minimize the risks of their applications to pollinators and other non-target species.

**Peter Gorman, President, CT Environmental Council**

**Mark Kelbacher, Mission Green Services**

**Bob Mann, Senior Director of Technical & Regulatory Affairs, National Association of Landscape Professionals**

**Thomas Mauer, Weed Man Lawn Service**

**Heather Millette, Millette Pest Control**

**Eric Morrison, Manager, Shennecossett Golf Course**

**Vanessa Niro, Birch Hill Landscape & Design**

**Stephen Onofrio, Superintendent, Tunxis Country Club**

**David Peterson, President, Peterson Landscaping Services**

**Emilio Polce, President, Ecochoice**

**Tara Pratt, Director of Operations, Lawn Doctor**

**Douglas Tripp, Service Manager, TruGreen**

**Over 25 Connecticut Residents sent in testimony Opposing SB 963**

**Reported by: Judith Ganswindt**

**Date: March 14, 2023**