

Legislative Concept to Reduce Consumer Uses of Neonicotinoid Pesticides to Protect Pollinators

LC 676: Pollinator Protection Act

Chief Sponsor: Representative Hudson

Advocates: A coalition of organizations Beyond Toxics, Environment Oregon, Center for Food Safety, Xerces Society and others

Main Purpose: Directs the State Department of Agriculture to classify certain pesticides containing neonicotinoid insecticides as restricted-use. Requires the use of an Oregon Pesticide Applicators License to purchase and apply. Prohibits application of restricted-use neonicotinoids pesticides on residential landscapes, subject to certain exceptions for emergency pest problems and veterinarian uses.

Problem we are solving: Neonicotinoids are systemic pesticides that cause widespread environmental and economic damage threatening more than Oregon bee populations. When applied, neonicotinoids are absorbed into plant tissue, moving through the leaves and flowers, where the chemical poison accumulates in pollen and nectar. Typically, in most soil conditions, the neonicotinoid class of chemicals can take several years to break down. Because of their persistence in the environment, these chemicals accumulate in soils and leach into surface waters, where they pose significant survival risks for freshwater snails, butterflies, pollinators, fish and birds.

Solutions: Eleven other states have already taken action to restrict the use of neonicotinoid pesticides to licensed applicators only and to remove them from consumer-oriented grocery, garden and hardware stores. LC 676 would similarly restrict neonicotinoid pesticides from consumers' purchase, require an Oregon pesticide applicator license to purchase and apply them, and ban their use on residential properties. Oregon already restricts over 400 dangerous pesticides from general consumer purchase and use. Neonicotinoids should also be listed for restriction. Lower-toxicity alternatives exist that can replace neonicotinoids for common household and garden uses. Neonicotinoids would remain available for sale to certified applicators, and for use by farmers, veterinarians (for pet flea and tick control) and for use in human lice treatments.