



For Immediate Release

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City of Portland Takes Big Step Forward to Protect Pollinators, Birds, Salmon and Children from Dangerous Pesticides

This morning the Portland City Council took a big step forward in protecting Portland's wildlife and park users by passing an ordinance to ban the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, and plants treated with neonicotinoid pesticides, on lands owned by the City of Portland. The ordinance also encourages retailers operating within the City of Portland to accurately label plants, seeds and other products that have been treated with neonicotinoid pesticides. Neonicotinoids are persistent and widely used pesticides that are causing well-documented harm to wildlife and in particular, harm to wildlife and in particular bees, birds, and butterflies.

"These toxicants kill bees outright, so this ordinance is critical to protecting Portland's burgeoning local foods movement," said Lisa Arkin, Executive Director of Beyond Toxics, the group spearheading the adopted protections. "Bees pollinate over 30% of the food we eat and over 70% of all flowering plants. Importantly, children using Portland parks will be safer because of this ordinance."

In enacting this ban, Portland joins Seattle, Sacramento, Spokane and Eugene in banning neonicotinoids. It also joins the US Fish and Wildlife Service which in 2015 announced a ban on use of neonicotinoids on over 150 million acres of public land.

"This ban will benefit our pollinators and the entire ecosystem," said Lori Ann Burd, Environmental Health Director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "Neonicotinoids kill the beneficial insects that form the basis of the web of life, like caddisflies and mayflies, which are important food sources for salmon and trout.

"A single seed treated with neonicotinoids can kill a songbird and long-term exposure can have sub-lethal effects on birds such as reduced reproduction," said Bob Sallinger, Conservation Director for the Audubon Society of Portland. "The science regarding the damage that these insecticides do to wildlife is strong and it is time to get them out of our communities."

Beyond Toxics, Center for Biological Diversity and Audubon worked with the City of Portland to develop the ban and look forward to continuing to work with the City to ensure a successful implementation. The groups will continue to work at the state and federal levels as well as with other local communities to protect pollinators and prevent the threat to ecosystem balance posed by neonicotinoids.