



For Immediate Release

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

This morning the Portland City Council took a big step forward in protecting Portland's wildlife and park users by passing 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, bees, all pollinators and beneficial insects.

"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 Oregon, seven neonicotinoid insecticide applications in the summers of 2013 and 2014 caused the documented death of nearly 100,000 bumble bees, representing hundreds of colonies. Poisoning incidents occurred in Beaverton, Eugene, Portland, Wilsonville and other cities," said Aimee Mann, Pesticide Program Coordinator for the Xerces Society. "We hope that other Oregon cities will follow Portland's lead and also move forward with bans."

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.

"The benefits of this ban will go far beyond just pollinators," said Lori Ann Burd, Environmental Health Director, Center for Biological Diversity. "Neonicotinoids destroy the food web on which many species including salmon and birds depend."

"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, Xerces Society, 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.