



Biotechnology Innovation Organization
1201 New York Ave., NW
Suite 1300
Washington, DC, 20005
202-962-9200

April 14, 2025

Representative Bill Pluecker, Chair
Senator Rachel Talbot Ross, Chair
Representative Tim Guerrette, Ranking Member
Senator Russell Black, Ranking Member
Joint Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee
Maine Legislature
Cross Building, Room 214
Augusta, ME 04333

Subject: Oppose LD 1323 – An Act to Prohibit the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides and the Use and Sale of Neonicotinoid-treated Seeds

Dear Chairs Pluecker and Talbot Ross, Ranking Members Guerrette and Black, and Members of the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,

I write on behalf of the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) to urge you to oppose Legislative Document 1323 - An Act to Prohibit the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides and the Use and Sale of Neonicotinoid-treated Seeds, specifically the prohibition on the use and sale of neonicotinoid treated seed.

BIO is a Washington, DC-based trade group representing more than 1,100 biotechnology companies – including some based in Maine - academic institutions, state biotechnology centers, and related organizations across the United States and 31 other nations. BIO members include agricultural, health care, and industrial companies.

BIO is extremely concerned that LD 1323 would, starting January 1, 2026, prohibit a person from selling, offering for sale or use, distributing or using any neonicotinoid-treated seed for soybeans or for any crop in the cereal grains crop group. While the measure permits the Commissioner of Agriculture to waive the prohibition on the use of neonicotinoid treated seeds for growers that meet certain conditions, it also permits the Commissioner to rescind waivers he or she has already granted to farmers. Under this scenario, farmers – having been told that they could go ahead and purchase and use neonicotinoid treated seeds – would be out thousands of dollars. This is an especially cruel and mean-spirited provision.



Although two states – New York and Vermont - recently enacted legislation restricting the use of neonicotinoid treated seed, those measures will not become effective until January 1, 2029. This delay, along with committed efforts by both states to investigate the effectiveness of alternatives to neonicotinoid treated seed, seems to be an open admission by each state that they are not sure if restricting farmers from using neonicotinoid treated seed is workable and that it perhaps unfairly disadvantages their states' growers and producers. It would be a mistake then for Maine legislators to follow such an uncertain and questionable path.

It should also be noted that the New York law does not include a provision allowing for the rescinding of waivers and while such language is in the Vermont statute, that section is likely to be revisited by Vermont lawmakers next year.

I appreciate your time and attention toward my concerns about LD 1323, and again urge to recommend that the legislation "Ought Not To Pass." Should you have any questions regarding my testimony, feel free to contact me at gharrington@bio.org or (202) 365-6436.

Sincerely,

Gene Harrington
Senior Director, State Government Affairs, Agriculture & Environment

About BIO

BIO is a national trade organization, based in Washington, DC, representing more than 1,100 biotechnology companies, academic institutions, state biotechnology centers, and related organizations across the United States and 31 other nations. BIO members are involved in the research and development of healthcare, agricultural, industrial, and environmental biotechnology products. Biotechnology researchers expand the boundaries of science to benefit mankind by providing better healthcare, enhanced agriculture, and a cleaner and safer environment.

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