

Maine Dairy Industry Association  
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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,  
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

***in OPPOSITION to***

*“LD1323 An Act to Prohibit the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides and the Use and Sale of Neonicotinoid-treated Seeds”*

Senator Talbot-Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of Joint Standing Committee On Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, this testimony is submitted on behalf of the Maine Dairy Industry Association (MDIA.)

MDIA represents the 138 cow-dairy farms in the state shipping milk. Our farms are located in 15 of Maine's 16 counties. MDIA represents all of Maine's dairies, no matter the size or style of operation. Our producers range in size from five to 2,000 cows. We have 91 farms producing milk using conventional systems of production, and 47 using organic systems. Twelve of these farms are producer dealers, while the remaining 126 ship their milk to a processor. All but two of these farms are owned and managed by Maine families. Some are multi-generational families who have stewarded Maine's farmland for hundreds of years, while many are first generation farmers, just starting on their own family's farm journey. It is on behalf of these farms that we would like to submit this testimony against LD1323.

The Maine Board of Pesticide Control is our State's lead agency for pesticide control. This issue should be taken up by that board, as it is the purpose of their creation and therefore well within their purview. The dairy farmers who utilize pesticides on their farms do so with full certification, ensuring the safety of their neighbors as well as their crops. This is a precision tool in farmers' tool chest, one that they utilize with the utmost care and responsibility. When these treatments are utilized as seed treatment for crops like corn, they are able to target pests during the early stage of development, often reducing the need for treatment by spraying. If a farm is experiencing an emergent issue with a crop, it is often found after the fact, with limited, if any, options for mediation. The ability to treat seed or use treated seeds is an early opportunity for mitigation, and opportunity to safeguard our farm's sustainability. Feed corn is an important part of our cows' diet, improving our cows' health and ensuring their efficient production of milk, all of which would be greatly impacted if they were to miss this crop in their diet.

If passed, this bill will put our Maine dairy farmers at a disadvantage economically, and could have severe implications for our dairy farming community. Maine's dairy farmers are already limited in so many ways, being at the end of the line. To limit them further by banning treated seed would have a financial impact many farms would be unable to weather.

We fully support a current, location-based study to increase our understanding of neonicotinoids, and the factual impact they have on pollinators.

Thank you for consideration, we will be available for the work session.