



Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony in support of LD1323, *An Act to Prohibit the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides and the Use and Sale of Neonicotinoid-treated Seeds*

April 15, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry, my name is Cathy Breen. I am the Director of Government Affairs at Maine Conservation Voters (MCV), a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters that is building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. I'm speaking in support of **LD1323, *An Act to Prohibit the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides and the Use and Sale of Neonicotinoid-treated Seeds***.

At a time when Maine's farms are struggling to survive amidst the challenges of climate change and PFAS soil contamination, the State of Maine needs to do all it can to protect Maine farms and support Maine farmers. Maine farms are critical to Maine's food ecosystem and long-term economic prosperity, generating close to \$1 billion in annual revenue.¹ Another significant threat to Maine farms is the decrease of pollinator species in recent years due in part to the use of neonicotinoids ("neonics"), a class of synthetic pesticides that are used widely due to their effectiveness as a neurotoxin to eliminate pests. Although the state took action to limit the use of the most common of these products in 2021, neonics continue to proliferate in Maine soils, waters and plants, threatening Maine's 270 species of bees.

LD1323 would prohibit the application of all neonics to ornamental plants, plants during bloom, and certain crops, as well as prohibit the use of neonic coated soybean and cereal crop seeds. The bill does not disturb any pre-existing exemptions due to agricultural and environmental emergencies. Maine would join New York, Vermont, Quebec and Ontario, and the European Union in disallowing the use of neonic coatings on seeds. This will go a long way in protecting our pollinator species, which will also support farms all over Maine.

I encourage you to vote "Outh to Pass," and I thank you for your consideration.

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https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/Maine/st23_1_002_002.pdf