

**From:** glen riley  
**To:** [SENR Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** please pass SB 929 Pollinator Protection Act  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2017 8:39:43 AM

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Dear Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

I hope that you will support the passage of Senate Bill 929, the 'Pollinator Protection Act'.

As someone who has worked in agriculture, landscape, and garden arenas for over 60 years, I have seen dramatic declines in pollinator populations, due to numerous factors. One of the main factors for this decline is the unnecessary use of pesticides like neonicotinoids. Besides adversely affecting pollinators, neonicotinoids also harm ecological, genetic and human health.

Why am I concerned about the continued worldwide decline of pollinator populations? As a person who has worked in hundreds of commercial and home orchards, more and more when orchard owners ask me why they are not getting fruit, I increasingly reply that I am not seeing pollinators in their relevant landscapes. We cannot have fruit unless the fruit is pollinated. We have to change this trend of pollinator decline. One important way to reverse this trend is to quit poisoning our pollinators.

Even from the onset, the argument that we need neonicotinoid treatments of seed stocks is an argument lacking long-term vision. As a person who has been breeding plants for 40 years, it's very evident that the use of pesticides like neonicotinoids does not allow species of plants to develop genetic resistance to plants and diseases. Neonicotinoids are weakening the genetic resilience to diseases of the populations that they are supposedly protecting. Neonicotinoids cause genetic erosion.

Even beyond the seeds which they are allegedly protecting from disease, neonicotinoids revive failing grades. Neonicotinoids accumulate in soils and cause poison or kill other organisms. Birds are poisoned when they eat invertebrates in the soils where neonicotinoids are applied. When it rains these toxins flow into marine communities, harming juvenile salmon that eat the marine invertebrates which ingested prey or herbage contaminated with neonicotinoids.

Eventually, these toxins work up food chains, harming organisms far beyond the target ones. Whether birds, salmon, or even us humans, we all rely on healthy microbiome communities in our bodies to digest food. When we eat other microorganisms that have ingested toxins, we get them in our own bodies. These toxins indiscriminately kill off beneficial organisms in our own bodies, and we develop diseases. Why would anyone think it's OK to poison ourselves?

Many people will deny this is happening, but usually this is only a reflection of personal economic gain or ignorance. We societies rarely, if ever, perform sufficient, independent, long-term studies of new pesticides that are introduced. Consequently, we do not recognize the damage done until decades later. Think of DDT. Endrin. Heck, even today a lot of people are finally reexamining Roundup. In this case apparently the dangers of this product were not publicized due to industry collusion with regulators. This points out another harm done by the clandestine world of pesticide use. Besides the damage done by these toxins throughout human and natural communities, another loss is the trust that we the public has placed in those of use we thought protect us from poisons.

I speak from experience, not dogma. I am one of them whose trust has been frayed. I worked for 5 years in NW commercial orchards in the 1970s, but quit that line of work solely because of adverse exposures to pesticides. I loved working in the orchards, and still do, but only in organic ones. In pesticide orchards, too often I saw both myself and other workers getting very sick due to pesticide exposure. In many instances, neither we workers nor fruit consumers had sufficient regulatory protection from pesticide exposure. How many consumers know how to test for toxins on their food? Too few of us have the background to adequately assess these issues. This issue continues today, and ignorance allows toxins continue to find their ways into our landscapes and marketplaces. I wish that we could all do more important things than constantly revisit pesticide issues. All we can do is that current leadership recognizes our public interests.

But, as I do have a background with these issues, borne out of personal experience and study, I believe it is my duty to caution others about the dangers of permitting the continued use of controversial pesticides like neonicotinoids. We do not need them. We do not want their widespread adverse impacts. We do not want to allow them to continue to be applied simply to accommodate the short- term economic gains of those very few people who support their continued use.

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