



March 27, 2017

Oregon Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources
900 Court St. NE, S-407
Salem, OR 97301
Sen.MichaelDembrow@state.or.us

Re: Support for SB 929, The Oregon Pollinator Protection Act

Dear Chairperson Dembrow and Members of the Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources:

My name is Lori Ann Burd and I'm the Center for Biological Diversity's Environmental Health Program Director. I'm here today on behalf of myself, the Center, and our thousands of members and supporters in Oregon to express support of SB 929, the Oregon Pollinator Protection Act. The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than one million members and supporters dedicated to the protection of imperiled wildlife and wild places.

Thousands of studies have proven the role of neonicotinoid insecticides in bee declines. These toxic pesticides cause both acute impacts, which can lead to a large number of bees dying at once, and also sub-acute impacts, which include impairing memory with the result of bees not being able to find their ways home; weakening communication skills, making it impossible for bees to fight predators; and suppressing defenses to viruses and other pathogens. Our native bees are even more sensitive to neonicotinoids than honey bees, studies on various native bee species have found everything from a 50% decrease in offspring production, zero reproduction at exposure levels that don't affect honey bees, and an 85% drop in bumble bee queen production.

We are deeply concerned about what these pesticides are doing to our native bee populations. Earlier this month, we released a [report](#) containing the first ever systematic review of the status of all 4,337 North American and Hawaiian native bee species. Our key findings:

- Among native bee species with sufficient data to assess (1,437), more than half (749) are declining.
- Nearly 1 in 4 (347 native bee species) is imperiled and at increasing risk of extinction.

- A significant driver of these declines is pesticide use, especially neonicotinoid insecticides.

The decline of Oregon's native bees is a threat to agriculture, and it is also a threat to our natural ecosystems. Almost 90 percent of wild plants are dependent on insect pollination, making bees indispensable pollinators in most ecosystems. One of Oregon's native bees, the Franklin's bumble bee, may have already gone extinct on our watch, but over 200 native bee species have called Oregon home, and timely action to restrict the use of neonicotinoids could play an important role in saving these incredible creatures from extinction. If we don't take action to save our native bees, we can say goodbye to the pleasure of feasting on juicy huckleberries in the summer time. If we don't act to save these remarkable creatures, our world will be a less colorful and more lonesome place.

I thank you for your consideration of my testimony and this bill and urge you to act to protect Oregon's incredible and imperiled native pollinators by supporting SB 929.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Ann Burd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lori Ann Burd
Environmental Health Program
Director
Staff Attorney
Center for Biological Diversity
971-717-6405
LABurd@biologicaldiversity.org