

To: Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee
From: Lisa Arkin, Executive Director, Beyond Toxics
Subject: In support of:

- SB 928 – Labeling plants pre-treated with neonicotinoids
- SB 929 – Restricting neonicotinoids to professional pesticide applicators

Date: March 27, 2017

Thank you very much for holding this hearing for SB 928 and SB 929, two bills that provides Oregonians with an opportunity to protect endangered pollinators and water quality. My name is Lisa Arkin and I represent Beyond Toxics, the statewide environmental health non-profit. I worked with Representative Reardon in 2015 to raise awareness and pass legislation to protect pollinators, and worked with legislators in 2009 to pass the Oregon School Integrated Pest Management Act. I also serve on a number of agency workgroups regarding reducing toxics in the environment. I urge a favorable vote on two bills - SB 928 and SB 929, the Oregon Pollinator Protection Act.

Pollinators are in crisis in our country. The federal government under the Trump Administration has listed a native bumble bee on the Endangered Species List. The Rusty Patched Bumble Bee has the notorious status of nearing its complete demise, thus robbing farmers and future generations of this effective and hardworking pollinator. By adding the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee, the US Endangered Species list now protects eight species of native bees.

It is well known that bees are suffering due to a number of environmental impacts. One of the top contributions to the decline of our pollinators is exposure to neonicotinoid pesticides. This class of pesticides are neurotoxins that weaken the ability of the bee to survive other threats such as viruses and mites. Neonicotinoids also harm a bee's ability to forage for pollen and nectar, find their way back home and maintain the next generation of bees in the hive.

Plants that have been pre-treated with neonicotinoid pesticides before they are sold are an attractive death trap for bees. These pesticides are systemic and persistent poisons, which means they accumulate in the nectar and pollen of a plant. A bee visiting a treated flowering plant can die on contact or bring poisons back to the hive.

Consumers don't want to buy plants to attract bees to their garden, only to find out later that those plants harmed the very pollinators that the gardener was seeking. That is why consumers would like to have plants labeled for containing neonicotinoid pesticides.

Labeling is part of the answer to saving bees, but labeling can only do so much. For example, I've included a photograph of a label for plants treated with neonicotinoid pesticides. As you can see, this label perpetuates confusion about neonicotinoids and encourages a consumer to assume that the product is safe. SB 928 would need to ensure that labels are not simply used to misdirect consumers.

SB 929, the Oregon Pollinator Protection Act, provides a more certain means of protecting bees. As Oregon has done with nearly 500 other pesticide products, we can require that neonicotinoids

are labeled as a Restricted Use Product. The Restricted Use Product designation is commonly used when a pesticide is too toxic and persistent in the environment for general use.

Consumer urban uses are harmful to native bumble bees. The RUP designation insures only a professional applicator trained and licensed by the Oregon Department of Agriculture is able to buy and apply the product.

Without bees, Oregon stands to lose hundreds of millions of dollars in agricultural production. Without bees 89% of the flowering trees and plants in our environment will be unable to produce seeds for the next generation. A pesticide with such dire impacts doesn't belong in residential gardens and lawns from applications made by untrained general consumers.

Please pass both SB 928 and SB 929, both of which are necessary to prevent the extinction of pollinators.

An Oregon-based Home Depot store displayed this label alerting the consumer that the flower was pre-treated with neonicotinoid pesticides.

However, the wording on the label could be misconstrued as claiming that using the pesticide as a pre-treatment is beneficial rather than harmful to bees.

