

TO: Representative Brian Clem, Chair, Committee on Agriculture and Land Use
Members of the Committee

FR: Lindsey Cope
Mid Columbia Producers, Seedsman

Date: March 26, 2019

RE: Vote NO on HB 3058

Mid Columbia Producers is a major grain cooperative serving North Central Oregon. The seed department works with seed growers to produce certified seed for the area farmers to plant for the commercial export market. These seed fields are inspected and certified by us and Oregon Seed Certification for cleanliness and quality. MCP then cleans and treats this seed for the area farmers. We handle over half a million bushels of wheat and barley every year. Over 90% of the seed we treat is treated with a neonicotinoid product.

These treatments are a vital component of our farmers integrated pest management programs. Neonicotinoid seed treatments are the most effective and affordable solution to the pest issues our growers face. There are no alternatives that offer the same level of affordable control. For our seed production fields, control of wireworms that can affect the uniformity of the stand is an important part of weed control for overall field cleanliness. Commercial growers also depend on these for weed control as well as yield and quality protection. Once a seedling is lost to wireworm or aphid transmitted barley yellow dwarf virus, there is no getting it back. Our farmers rely on neonicotinoid products to protect their plants.

In the treating process, extreme care is taken to ensure the neonicotinoid product is handled in a safe way. The products are stored in sealed totes in a climate controlled room until application. The seed is treated on demand into the farmers truck. The products are applied directly to the seed as it goes up an auger. It takes less than 30 seconds for the product to be applied and dried on the seed. We also use fatty acid complexes in the treatment blends to ensure the treatment stays on the seed. The farmers then take this seed in a covered truck directly to the field to be planted. With these processes there is no risk to pollinators. The seed industry and farmers are also continuously being educated about these products and processes to maintain the best practices and ensure quality and safety.

Losing these products would be a detrimental hit to our area farmers. If we were without neonicotinoid products for even one growing season, we would be left with higher pest populations to control and inadequate control methods. Oregon has a reputation of high quality seed and commercial wheat that needs to be maintained.