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News Release

Eugene City Council bans neonicotinoids and Oregon Governor signs bee protection legislation

Both policies are first to pass in the nation

EUGENE, ORE. —Oregon has jumped into the lead in the search to find creative solutions to the bee decline crisis in America. ***Policy decisions to protect bees at both the state and local levels are creating a great deal of buzz in the Twittersphere and on Facebook.*** These affirmative actions put Oregon in the forefront of national efforts to address the growing threat to bees--and therefore agriculture --posed by the widespread use of a highly toxic class of pesticides called neonicotinoids.

EUGENE IS FIRST CITY IN NATION TO BAN NEONICOTINOIDS: On February 26, at the request of Beyond Toxics and neighborhood leaders, Eugene’s City Council unanimously passed a Council Resolution, “[Enhancing Current Integrated Pest Management in Parks](#),” which bans the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on all city property. City staff in charge of parks and open space expressed support for the ban and said they were finding successful alternatives to these dangerous pesticides. The Resolution goes further to enhance the City’s efforts to create Pesticide Free parks in every neighborhood. Towards that goal, the Resolution has decisive language about the need to provide toxic free play areas for children because of their unique susceptibility to neurological damage from even small amounts of pesticide exposure.

OREGON FIRST STATE TO PASS BEE LEGISLATION: On March 6, Gov. John Kitzhaber signed [HB4139-A](#), **Save Oregon's Pollinators Act**, into law. This is the nation’s first statewide legislation passed with the intent to better protect pollinators from pesticides. The compromise bill passed both the House and Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support. Oregon will be the first to require those applying for a pesticide applicators license to take a specific course on Pollinator Health and Pesticides and pass the final exam. The bill also creates a Governor-appointed task force to bring the bee protection issue back in the next legislative session.

Lisa Arkin, Director of Beyond Toxics, an Oregon environmental health non-profit , attended the Eugene City Council work session when Resolution 5101 was passed. She said, “I’m proud that Eugene is the first city to step up and protect bees from these particularly dangerous pesticides. Eugene’s precautionary policy is a good model for other local and state governments.”

On the state victory, Arkin points out HB 4139 ([Save Oregon's Pollinators Act](#)) responds to the concerns of many Oregonians: “Although the bill was amended in Committee, its passage starts us off in the right direction to protect bees. Without bees, Oregon food production industries would lose hundreds of millions of dollars.”

The latest blog from our Executive Director, Lisa Arkin, summarizes the significance of these wins:

<http://www.beyondtoxics.org/blog/2014/03/for-bees-important-new-legislative-progress-in-oregon/>

For more background about the issue of bee decline and the phenomenon’s link to the use of neonicotinoid pesticides:

<http://www.beyondtoxics.org/work/safe-public-places/healthy-bees-healthy-gardens/>