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# Eugene, Oregon Passes Resolution Banning Neonicotinoids

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Washington, DC--(ENEWSPF)--March 5, 2014. The City of Eugene, Oregon, became the first community in the nation to specifically ban from city property the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, which have scientifically linked to the decline of honey bee colonies. The passage of the resolution came just one week after the Oregon state legislature passed a pollinator protection bill that removed language requiring the restriction of neonicotinoid pesticides, and includes instead a weaker requirement to set up a task force that will examine the possibility of future restrictions. In addition to neonicotinoid restrictions, the City's resolution also expands Eugene's pesticide-free parks program and now requires all departments to adopt integrated pest management (IPM) standards.

The Eugene City Council action was taken unanimously on February 26 with the passage of **Council Resolution, "Enhancing Current Integrated Pest Management in Parks,"** Resolution 5101. The resolution also includes clear goals on children's health, expands the current Parks and Open Space Division's Pesticide-Free Parks program from 10 to potentially 40 parks, and requires IPM on all city property.

The resolution notes that "children and infants may be especially sensitive to health risks posed by pesticides for several reasons: (a) their internal organs are still developing and maturing; (b) in relation to their body weight, infants and children eat and drink more than adults, possibly increasing their exposure to pesticides in food and

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water; and (c) certain behaviors, such as playing on floors or lawns or putting objects in their mouths, increase a child's exposure to pesticides used in homes and yards." On neonicotinoids, the resolution refers to recent research suggesting a possible link between pesticides that contain neonicotinoids and the die-off of plant pollinators, including honey bees, native bees, butterflies, moths, and other insects.

In 2003, the City of Eugene adopted and implemented an 'environmental policy' cementing the City's commitment to protecting, preserving, and restoring the natural environment. To that end, the City's decision-making is to be guided by the goals of increasing environmental benefits and reducing or eliminating negative environmental impacts in all aspects of the City's activities, while maintaining the City's fiscal integrity and the community's economic vitality. Soon after in 2006, the City initiated a Pesticide-Free Parks Program to maintain City parks without the use of registered pesticides unless there is a threat to public health or safety. Currently, there are nine parks in the Pesticide-Free Parks Program, which include Awbrey Park, Berkeley Park, Brewer Park, Friendly Park, Gilbert Park, Rosetta Park, Scobert Gardens Park, Shadow Wood Park, and Washington Park.

One week before the new resolution was passed in Eugene, the **Oregon Legislature passed a new law, HB 4139**, requiring anyone applying for a pesticide license to take a course on pollinators and pesticides and pass the exam. HB 4139 also requires the Governor to establish a Task Force directed to continue the research on bee health and pesticides for legislative action in 2015. While the

legislation fell short of the original bill that would have restricted the neonicotinoids; **dinotefuran, imidacloprid, clothianidin** and **thiamethoxam**, many advocates in Oregon see this as a step forward for bee protection considering the lack of action by the EPA and other states.

Several bee-kill incidents occurred in Oregon last summer, including one that **killed more than 50,000 bumblebees** after a licensed pesticide applicator sprayed blooming linden trees, a violation of the pesticide label. After a preliminary investigation, the Oregon Department of Agriculture confirmed that the massive bee die-off was caused by the use of the neonicotinoid insecticide, dinotefuran. But the incident only resulted in a small fine of under \$3,000, just 6 cents per bee, infuriating beekeepers, environmentalists, and advocates, but spurring legislative action.

Like Eugene, there are other states and communities that have been trying to pass local policies relating

specifically to neonicotinoids, bees and other pollinators. In **California**, beekeepers and local advocates are supporting a bill that would force the state of California to complete its evaluation of neonicotinoid pesticides, years ahead of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) review which is not scheduled to be completed before 2018. In **Maryland**, a bill containing language to restrict neonicotinoid pesticides was unfortunately recently withdrawn, after an "unfavorable report" by the environmental committee. In **New York** and **New Jersey** language has been drafted in the state legislature to restrict neonicotinoids in various ways.

Meanwhile in Congress, **The Saving America's Pollinator Act**, H.R 2692, introduced by Reps. John Conyers (D-MI) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), is gaining bipartisan support in the House. The bill seeks to suspend the use of neonicotinoid pesticides until a full review of scientific evidence and a field study demonstrates no harmful impacts to pollinators. The bill has been endorsed by several environmental groups, including Beyond Pesticides, Center for Food Safety, Center for Biological Diversity, Earthjustice and others.

Join us in Portland, Oregon to hear **Rep. Jeff Reardon (D-Portland)**, who introduced HB 4139, the Save Oregon Pollinators Act, discuss the future of legislative efforts in the state surrounding pollinators, at Beyond Pesticides' 32nd National Pesticide Forum, Advancing Sustainable Communities: People, pollinators and practices, April 11-12, 2013, Portland State University, Portland, OR. This year's forum will focus on solutions to the decline of pollinators and other beneficials; strengthening the organic food production system; regulating and right-to-know genetically engineered food; improving farmworker protection and agricultural justice; and creating healthy buildings, schools and homes.

Sources: **Beyond Toxics**, <http://www.beyondpesticides.org>

All unattributed positions and opinions in this piece are those of Beyond Pesticides.