



Responsible Industry for
a Sound Environment®

March 9, 2023

Representative Samantha Vang, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture Finance and Policy
Capitol, Room 120

RE: HF 1130, Cities authorized to adopt pesticide control ordinances.

Chair Vang, Members of House Committee on Agriculture Finance and Policy:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HF 1130, which would remove existing state authority that ensures safe and consistent regulatory standards for residential, commercial, and agricultural pesticides in the state. We **Oppose HF 1130** a bill that would weaken the State's ability to effectively regulate pesticides in Minnesota.

Pesticides in Minnesota are registered and regulated by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. These regulations enforced by the Department of Agriculture ensure safe and proper pesticide use in the state through registration of pesticides, licensing of pesticide applicators, and through research and enforcement activities. Uniform state law comprehensively regulates virtually every other aspect of labeling, distribution, sale, storage, transportation, use and application, and disposal of pesticides in the state.

State regulation of pesticides also ensures uniformity with federal regulation, and between states and their municipalities to avoid confusion that may endanger public health or the environment from differing requirements. HF 1130 would remove this authority and weaken important standards, increase costs to Minnesotans due to a patchwork of compliance and additional needed resources, and create confusion and the potential for endangering people and natural resources.

Pesticides are important public health and environmental tools, protecting people, pets, and property from pests and insect-borne diseases, invasive and non-native plants, and providing safe and healthy places to live, work and play. Pesticides are rigorously reviewed, evaluated, and approved for sale and use at the state and federal levels on an ongoing basis, ensuring they meet the most current scientific and safety standards. The manufacture, sale, and use of pesticides is extensively regulated by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Pesticides are among the most highly regulated products in the nation. Overriding the authority of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture would create a patchwork of local rules and regulations in Minnesota across the 107 Home Rule cities and the 746 Statutory cities. HF 1130 removes this authority therein weakening public health and safety standards, environmental protection options for harmful and invasive insect and plant species, consistency in regulation and labeling of products, and other licensing and training standards currently set forth and implemented by the state. Both state and Federal pesticide regulatory agencies have significant staff resources devoted to reviewing and understanding proper uses, risks, and benefits of pesticides before registering them for use.

Instead of allowing local governments to regulate or ban use of pesticides, we ask the committee to consider measurable actions to support pollinators and to mitigate proven stressors such as loss of habitat and forage, climate change, viruses, and diseases. Actions that can make a real difference for bees include:

- Amplifying existing public outreach activities about supporting pollinators.
- Ensuring plans and actions are evidence-based to make a difference in pollinator health.
- Investing in public land management strategies that maximize available nutrition and forage.
- Investing in data-gathering and research to determine the best course of action to support pollinators.
- Supporting programs for increasing flower space and plant species diversity by planting bee-attractive gardens that include nectar rich plants, fruit-bearing trees, hedgerows, and flowering shrubs in urban and suburban residential and commercial settings. Bees with access to an abundant food supply are more resilient to other stressors.
- Addressing varroa mite challenges and mitigation efforts in the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter as the Committee undertakes its deliberations about pesticide authority in Minnesota. At this time, we urge the Committee to oppose HF 1130 in its current form.

Sincerely,

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RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) is the national trade association representing manufacturers, formulators, distributors and other industry leaders engaged with specialty pesticides.