



POLLINATOR FRIENDLY ALLIANCE  
PO BOX 934, STILLWATER, MN 55082  
[WWW.POLLINATORFRIENDLY.ORG](http://WWW.POLLINATORFRIENDLY.ORG)

[Support for HF718](#): Empower cities to make choices on pesticide use in their own community

Date: February 17, 2021

To: Minnesota House of Representatives, Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

**Pollinator Friendly Alliance strongly supports HR718 to delegate control over pollinator-lethal pesticides to local communities.** Currently, Minnesota state pesticide preemption law denies local residents and leaders their democratic right to decide if minimum pesticide use standards set by state and federal law are appropriate for their own communities.

[Pollinator Friendly Alliance](#) is a Minnesota grassroots conservation organization. We understand the **importance of community pride and empowerment** for local people to invest in their own neighborhoods. During the pandemic, people are at home and in their communities now more than ever and realize the importance of being good stewards for the health of their own community.

**Local people and leaders know their own community best** and it's time to empower cities to make their own decisions on the pesticides being used near their homes and businesses. Pesticides that can contaminate water, land and our food source. Local control on pesticide choices was taken away in 1989 in Minnesota. Bill HR718 will restore those rights such as other U.S. states enjoy. These are historical times and policymakers such as yourselves have the responsibility to make important decisions to sustain a healthy world for the future.

**Recent science shows that neonic pesticides not only kill pollinators outright** or sicken them at sublethal doses, and recent studies show neonics contaminate water ([Five surface water pesticides of concern, Minnesota MDA 2020](#)), birds are affected ([Neonic reduces migration in songbirds, Eng 2019](#)) and most recently effect large mammals ([Effects of neonics on physiology and reproduction of white-tailed deer, Berheim 2019](#)). Two flagship species, monarch butterfly and rusty patched bumble bee (Minnesota state bee) are under the watchful eyes of pollinator researchers and declining numbers of monarchs tell us that pollinators are in big trouble requiring immediate action.

**This bill is not a big ask, and it allows a thoughtful approach and is farmer friendly.** It allows a city to discriminate between cosmetic use of pesticides in urban areas and agricultural use and provides for a tiered decision-making process to allow only what is necessary. Currently, fifty Minnesota communities passed [Pollinator Protection Resolutions](#) pledging to remove pollinator-lethal pesticides, so we know this is a need. Granting local control does not guarantee increased regulation – rather it allows communities the chance to do what is appropriate in their own backyards, school yards, parks and local public areas for a healthy community. **Please support HF718 by voting YES to keeping Minnesota communities healthy and strong.**

Thank you,  
Laurie Schneider, Executive Director,  
and the Members of the Board of Directors  
Pollinator Friendly Alliance  
[laurie@pollinatorfriendly.org](mailto:laurie@pollinatorfriendly.org)  
[www.pollinatorfriendly.org](http://www.pollinatorfriendly.org)

## Selected support references:

**PESTICIDES IN MINNESOTA WATERS:** Minnesota Department of Agriculture, *surface water pesticides of concern* (2020)

<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/surface-water-pesticides-concern>

**POLLINATOR DECLINE:** Xerces Society: *The science behind the role neonics play in harming bees*. Jennifer Hopwood, Aimee Code, Mace Vaughan et al. (2016)

[https://xerces.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/16-023\\_01\\_XercesSoc\\_ExecSummary\\_How-Neonicotinoids-Can-Kill-Bees\\_web.pdf](https://xerces.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/16-023_01_XercesSoc_ExecSummary_How-Neonicotinoids-Can-Kill-Bees_web.pdf)

**NEONIC EFFECTS ON LARGE MAMMALS:** Scientific Reports: *Effects of Neonicotinoid Insecticides on Physiology and Reproductive Characteristics of Captive Female and Fawn White-tailed Deer*. Elise Hughes Berheim, Jonathan A. Jenks, Jonathan G. Lundgren, et al. volume 9, Article number: 4534 (2019)

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-40994-9>

**NEONIC EFFECTS ON SONGBIRDS:** Science: *A neonicotinoid insecticide reduces fueling and delays migration in songbirds*. Margaret L. Eng, LeBridget, J. M. Stutchbury, Christy A. Morrissey. Issue 13 Sep 2019: Vol. 365, Issue 6458, pp. 1177-1180.

<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/365/6458/1177>

**CHLORPYRIFOS and PUBLIC HEALTH:** *EPA science says chlorpyrifos exposure threatens public health*. Cara Schulte, July 2019.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/22/trump-administration-refuses-ban-neurotoxic-pesticide#>

Bluestem Prairie: *Corteva to stop manufacturing chlorpyrifos by end of year; MN lawmakers asked for ban in 2017*. Sally Sorenson, February 2020.

<https://www.bluestemprairie.com/bluestemprairie/2020/02/corteva-to-stop-manufacturing-chlorpyrifos-by-end-of-year-mn-lawmakers-asked-for-ban-in-2017.html>

**POLLINATOR PROTECTION RESOLUTION:** *Model resolution for cities, counties, state agencies, school districts*. Pollinator Friendly Alliance, Humming for Bees, Pesticide Action Network, Pollinator Minnesota 2020.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59fcf40ab1ffb6ee9911ad2a/t/5f8fb7dcac3e6348089291a2/1603254237712/MODEL+resolution+2020.pdf>

[Support for HF718](#): Empower cities to make choices on pesticide use in their own community

Date: February 21, 2021

To: Minnesota House of Representatives, Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

**The Minnesota Citizens for the Protection of Migratory Birds (MCPMB)** strongly supports HF 718, a bill that allows for a small measure of local control over the use of pesticides beyond what state law allows- if those cities chose to do so. We support this bill for the reasons below and it is all about choice which is what democracy means:

**This bill is good for democracy, health, and the environment.** State preemption laws effectively deny local residents and decision makers their democratic right to choose better protection when a community decides that minimum standards set by state and federal law are insufficient. Federal pesticide laws act as a floor and the state law should not act as a ceiling.

**Local control has been stripped away in Minnesota.** Since 1989, Minnesota statute has preempted local governments from passing a number of laws including the application, registration, handling, use, and disposal of pesticides. This bill restores a specific and uniform degree of local control over pesticides regarding use and application only to those Minnesota's cities that choose to do so. This bill is not a big ask, but rather finds solid middle ground and has a defined scope. It allows a thoughtful approach and is farmer friendly. It allows a city to discriminate between cosmetic use of pesticides in urban areas and agricultural use, and provides for a tiered decision-making process to allow only what is necessary and if the city chooses. Currently, fifty communities passed [Pollinator Protection Resolutions](#) which pledge to remove pollinator-lethal pesticides, so we know this is a need in Minnesota.

**This bill will set Minnesota on par with other states.** Minnesota certainly would not be the only state to have pesticide preemption—many states function with full local control over pesticides, including Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, Utah and Vermont. Minnesota itself didn't preempt pesticide use until 1989.

**This bill upholds the mission of federal pesticide legislation.** The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) has specifically established a partnership between local, state, and federal governments, recognizing that all levels of government are necessary for comprehensive pesticide laws. This partnership has resulted in a number of important solutions to pesticide problems. When localities have their hands tied, communities are prevented from solving regional pesticide issues that may not be applicable on a state-wide basis.

**This bill has a defined scope and is farmer-friendly.** This isn't the strongest step Minnesota could take on preemption, but rather finds solid middle ground. Looking at pesticide legislation, this bill could effectively discriminate between cosmetic pesticide applications in urban areas and agricultural

pesticide use. Of course, granting local control doesn't guarantee increased regulation—just that communities have the freedom to do so should they choose.

**This bill would allow cities that chose to do so to have an effective tool to protect pollinators and the environment.** Our state bee, the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, is a truly eco-friendly inhabitant of many Minnesota cities. In fact, many Minnesota cities are the last homes for what remains of these bees. The Rusty Patched Bumble Bee has picked up many advocate friends on local city councils who are responding to their constituents to help protect this canary in the coal mine.

**Recent science shows that neonic pesticides not only kill pollinators outright** or sicken them at sublethal doses, but recent studies show neonics contaminate water ([Five surface water pesticides of concern, Minnesota MDA 2020](#)), birds are affected ([Neonic reduces migration in songbirds, Eng 2019](#)) and most recently effect large mammals ([Effects of neonics on physiology and reproduction of white-tailed deer, Berheim 2019](#)).

Please support HF 718 by voting YES to good choices and a cleaner environment. VOTE YES to HF 718.

Wendy Haan, Co-Founder  
Minnesota Citizens for the Protection of Migratory Birds  
3824 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Mpls, MN 55406  
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/citizensprotectmigratorybirds/about/>

Environment and Natural Resources and Policy Committee

Chair Hansen and Committee Members:

I write to ask for your support for HF718, to delegate control over pollinator-lethal pesticides to local communities.

In 1989 local control on pesticide choices was removed, and currently a MN state preemption law denies local residents and leaders the choice to decide whether minimum pesticide use standards are appropriate. HF 718 will restore local control over the specific use and application of pesticides **near their homes and businesses, parks and recreation areas, and will help communities prevent cosmetic pesticide applications in urban localities.** However, it will only be in force in those Minnesota communities that specifically choose this option. **When communities have local control, it allows them to weigh in on regional pesticide issues that would not necessarily be applicable on a state-wide basis.** There are other states that function with complete local control over pesticide application, including AK, ME, VT, HI, MD, NE, and UT.

The use of pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides has become pervasive in rural agriculture and urban landscapes, and research has documented the presence of systemic chemicals including the class known as the neonicotinoids to the decline of native bees, such as bumble bees, domesticated honey bees, and certain bird species. Research also has revealed that these chemicals are also becoming prevalent in aquatic habitats impacting the invertebrates that birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians depend on to survive. Ongoing studies are looking at the effects of the neonicotinoids on the health of white-tailed deer.

This bill will offer communities with some options to protect pollinators that need plants with pollen and nectar that have not been contaminated with pesticides, as well as the other insects and wildlife critical to ecosystem integrity.

Please support HF 718

Thank you,

Margot Monson, Entomologist, Beekeeper  
22 Ludlow Ave.  
St Paul, MN 55108  
651-247-5253

Dear Representative Strohmeier,

Please include my letter of strong support for Bill HF718. Minnesota state pesticide preemption law denies local residents and leaders their democratic right to decide if minimum pesticide use standards set by state and federal law are appropriate for their own communities. We should not be restricted from being able to protect and care for our land and water where pesticides put both at risk. The health of our water and land is the health of the people that rely on it.

Specific concerns to me are the ongoing threat of neonic pesticide contamination, whether intentional or accidental. There is no lack of scientific evidence showing the damage inflicted on but not limited to pollinators. Songbirds, mammals and aquatic life also are negatively impacted.

While I understand that passing this bill will not ensure that local communities will use it to increase regulation and apply thoughtful management of these chemicals, at least there is more opportunity to do so within the outlined bill.

Please support HF718. Vote yes!

Here's to your health and ours! Thank you!

Penny Fuller, RN  
4106 Burton Lane  
Minneapolis, MN 55406

**Minnesota House of Representatives, Environment and  
Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee**

**Testimony in Support of HF 718**

Sarah Foltz Jordan, Senior Pollinator Conservation Specialist  
Aimee Code, Pesticide Program Director  
The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation  
February 22, 2021

The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation supports HF 718 as it allows targeted and valuable local control over pesticide use beyond what state law allows.

This bill reinstates a narrow decision making power to local governments to respond, if they wish, to potential risks posed by the use of pollinator-lethal pesticides in their own communities.

Towns and cities face unique concerns from pesticide use. For example, impervious surfaces and storm drain systems can lead to significant runoff into waterways, and gardens and other greenspaces-- which act as important refuges for wildlife-- can be contaminated with pesticides that compromise the health of at-risk pollinator species.

Current state law preempts local governments from creating laws around pesticide use. This preemption hamstring local decision makers from governing and responding to the pesticide concerns of their community. Federal pesticide law acts as a floor for state and local government to build on. As such, state law should not act as a ceiling. To be more specific, federal pesticide regulation establishes a partnership between local, state, and federal governments, recognizing that all levels of government are necessary for comprehensive pesticide laws. This partnership has resulted in a number of important solutions to pesticide problems. When localities have their hands tied with preemption mandates, communities are prevented from solving regional pesticide issues that may not be applicable on a state-wide basis.

Since 1987, Minnesota statute has preempted local governments from passing a number of laws that would address the application, registration, handling, use, and disposal of pesticides. This bill restores a specific and uniform degree of local control to make decisions regarding use and application if a city chooses to do so. Local control over pesticide decisions is already in place in many states. Currently a number of states allow full local control over pesticides: Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, Utah and Vermont.

This bill would provide cities with the choice to take targeted steps to protect pollinators and the environment in their own communities. Already some cities are interested in taking steps to protect our state bee, the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, as it is in severe decline rangewide, but is still hanging on in some areas of Minnesota, particularly in urban spaces. With the enactment of HF 718, communities would have the ability to take strategic and well-defined steps to help support this imperiled species.

Thank you.



Chair Hansen  
Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance Committee

Chair Hansen and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter on HF 718 and we thank Rep. Vang for introducing it. The City of Minneapolis is in support of bill HF718, giving Cities the option for reasonable control of warning signs and types of pesticides used in Minneapolis. All regulations and policy changes considered in our city would need to weigh beneficial uses of pesticides with environmental and human health consequences. We agree with the exceptions laid out in the bill for pet care, personal care, indoor pest control, as well as having a list maintained by the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, as they are experts in this field. The City of Minneapolis would not move forward with a local ordinance without consulting and working with knowledgeable industry experts, Department of Agriculture staff, and community groups before enacting a local ordinance. We believe this bill provides for reasonable local control within the equally reasonable confines of uniform standards that can be applied across the state and does not interfere with agriculture practices in greater Minnesota.

Steven Huser  
Government Relations Representative  
City of Minneapolis





February 22, 2021

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair  
House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee  
Via e-mail only: [Peter.Strohmeier@house.mn](mailto:Peter.Strohmeier@house.mn)

Re: **Support of HF 718 – Restoring local control of pesticides to cities**

Dear Chair Hansen and Representatives:

We strongly support HF 718, a bill that will restore local control over the use of pesticides, beyond what state law allows, for those cities that wish to exercise this option. In my first year as a State Senator, I successfully authored legislation in 1987 to preempt local governments from passing a number of laws including the application, registration, handling, use, and disposal of pesticides. A lot has changed in the intervening 34 years and it is now apparent that this measure was misguided and that this statute now stands as a barrier to good health for people, wildlife and the environment on which we all depend.

**This bill is good for democracy, health, and the environment.** State preemption laws effectively deny local residents their right to choose better protection when a community decides that minimum standards set by state and federal law are insufficient. Federal pesticide laws act as a floor and the state law should not act as a ceiling. This flies in the face of overarching goal to allow local governments to respond to localized needs as identified by their residents. Many states function with full local control over pesticides, including Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, Utah and Vermont.

**This bill upholds the mission of federal pesticide legislation.** The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) has specifically established a partnership between local, state, and federal governments, recognizing that all levels of government are necessary for comprehensive pesticide laws. This partnership has resulted in a number of important solutions to pesticide problems. When localities have their hands tied, communities are prevented from solving regional pesticide issues that may not be applicable on a state-wide basis.

**This bill has a defined scope and is farmer-friendly.** This isn't the strongest step Minnesota could take on preemption, but rather finds solid middle ground. Looking at pesticide legislation, this bill could effectively discriminate between cosmetic pesticide applications in urban areas and agricultural pesticide use. Of course, granting local control doesn't guarantee increased regulation—just that communities have the freedom to do so should they choose.

**This bill would allow cities an effective tool to protect pollinators and the environment.** Our state bee, the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, is a truly eco-friendly inhabitant of many Minnesota cities. In fact, many Minnesota cities are the last homes for what remains of these bees. The Rusty Patched Bumble Bee has picked up many advocate friends on local city councils who are responding to their constituents to help protect this canary in the coal mine. The state should get out of their way as they work to protect their people and pollinators.

**Please support HF 718 to restore control of pesticides to cities.** Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Morse". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Steve Morse  
Executive Director