



POLLINATOR FRIENDLY ALLIANCE

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Support for HF1317: Improved rulemaking and safer use, disposal and handling of pesticide-treated seed.

Date: March 6, 2023

To: Minnesota House of Representatives, Agriculture Finance & Policy Chair Vang and Committee Members.

We strongly support HF1317 for improved rulemaking and safer handling of pesticide treated seed.

Currently, there are not adequate federal or Minnesota state safeguards for the health of people and the environment from pesticide contamination from treated seed. Additionally, treated seed currently is NOT regulated as a pesticide in Minnesota. The no-nonsense provisions in bill HF1317 are necessary to protect us, pollinators and the environment from contamination disasters and chronic pesticide contamination.

[Pollinator Friendly Alliance](#) is a Minnesota conservation organization with a membership of urban and rural residents, scientists, businesses, farmers and ecologists from around Minnesota and beyond. We urge state legislators to step up in the absence of a fail-safe system to protect our waters, land and people from pesticide seed contamination. This is not a big ask - to simply strengthen the existing system for better stewardship. The rewards for health are great.

Some countries have banned neonicotinoid pesticides and treated seed entirely. Some communities around the U.S. are further restricting use. Almost fifty Minnesota communities have adopted resolutions to cease neonicotinoid pesticide use.

The wealthy pesticide industry can sell more treated seed using a loophole in federal pesticide law - **“treated article exemption” which permits seeds to be coated with toxic insecticides without assessment by the EPA for health or environmental effects.** This allows treated seed to be used without proper oversight.

The result of this negligence is evidenced by water contamination in Minnesota and an entire community in [Nebraska taking ill from pesticide coated seed contamination](#). Labels do not always protect us from improper handling, storage or mis-use either. Labels are very difficult to enforce because they are often impossible to interpret, the meaning is unclear and often not defined – for example what is a “measurable residue”? The label does not explain if the seed can be burned or re-used such was the case in the Nebraska catastrophe.

I come from a farm family and live in a rural area, so I know first-hand corn and soybean farmers often drill 1,000’s of acres of pesticide coated seed at a time. The pesticide dust floats and moves through the air, and afterward piles of seed are leftover laying in fields where birds and wildlife eat them, and ground water becomes contaminated. The current voluntary best practices are not

going to protect us or wildlife and the environment. A law is needed to require proper stewarding of treated seed.

Neonicotinoid contamination has been studied repeatedly and reported on for years – it is no secret that neonicotinoid insecticides on coated seeds are toxic. Recent science shows neonics have [human health effects](#), pesticides kill pollinators outright and sicken them at sublethal doses, neonics contaminate water ([Five surface water pesticides of concern, Minnesota MDA 2020](#)), birds are effected ([Neonic reduces migration in songbirds, Eng 2019](#)) and most recently large mammals such as deer ([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 at a critical point for extinction requiring immediate action.

These small steps to steward treated seed will help keep Minnesota communities safe.

Thank you,
POLLINATOR FRIENDLY ALLIANCE
www.pollinatorfriendly.org

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<https://neurosciencenews.com/neonicotinoid-asd-21898/>

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