

Unprecedented study confirms neonic pesticides endanger bees, birds, butterflies and earthworms

Landmark review by independent scientists bolsters the case for a ban

OTTAWA, June 25, 2014 — In light of a comprehensive review of the effects of neonicotinoid pesticides ("neonics"), environmental groups have renewed their call for federal and provincial governments to end the use of this class of chemicals in Canada.

Équiterre, the David Suzuki Foundation, Sierra Club Canada Foundation, the Wilderness Committee, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment and Friends of the Earth are responding to the conclusions of the Task Force on Systemic Pesticides, an international group of 50 independent scientists who released their findings today at a news conference in Ottawa.

The Task Force report represents an unprecedented scientific undertaking, on the scale of the IPCC's work on climate change. This new assessment of 800 peer-reviewed studies confirms concerns about the harmful effects of neonics on bees and other pollinators and also highlights serious risks to many other beneficial species, including butterflies, earthworms and birds.

"As independent scientists, we can now say conclusively there is clear evidence of harm sufficient to trigger regulatory action," said Madeleine Chagnon, co-author of the Task Force study and professor of biology at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

The Task Force went public for the first time this week. Its results have been accepted for publication later this summer in the academic journal *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*.

Neonics are widely used in Canada, mainly as a seed treatment for corn and soy crops and also in lawn pesticides. Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency has confirmed that neonics used on corn seed are a contributing factor to bee die-offs in Ontario and Quebec.

Exposure to neonicotinoid pesticides from contaminated food and water also raises possible public health concerns. These neurotoxic chemicals may harm the developing human nervous system, according to the European Food Safety Authority, and some are suspected endocrine disrupters.

"Neonicotinoids persist for a long time in soil and leach and end up in our waterways. We are concerned about their large-scale use and impacts on human health and ecosystems," said Sidney Ribaux, executive director of Équiterre.

Last year, the European Commission announced a moratorium on certain uses of neonics. Health Canada is responsible for pesticide regulation in Canada. Provincial governments also have the power to regulate use and sales of pesticides within their boundaries. Environmental groups have launched a public action campaign demanding that both levels of government act on the results of the new study and ban neonics.

"The conclusive findings of this new study demand a rethink of Canada's lackadaisical approach to neonics. We need to stop these chemicals from entering the environment," said Lisa Gue, researcher and analyst with the David Suzuki Foundation.

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Click [here](#) to support the David Suzuki Foundation's call to ban neonics in Canada. For more information, please contact:

Nadine Bachand, Équiterre 514-213-3287

Gwen Barlee, Wilderness Committee 604-683-8220

John Bennett, Sierra Club Canada Foundation 613-291-6888

Gideon Forman, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment 416-306-2273

Bea Olivastri, Friends of the Earth 613-241-0085

Jode Roberts, David Suzuki Foundation 647-456-9752

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