



Pollinator Pathway

March 15, 2019

Re: Support for Senate Bill No. 76, LCO Number 5558, AN ACT AUTHORIZING MUNICIPALITIES TO RESTRICT THE USE OF PESTICIDES IN CERTAIN AREAS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OR ON CERTAIN TYPES OF PROPERTIES

Dear Honorable Senator Cohen, Representative Demicco, and distinguished members of the Environment Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the 25-town Pollinator Pathway project, to urge you to support SB 76, which would allow Connecticut towns and cities the option of using their in-depth knowledge of their own municipalities to make decisions about where and when pesticides should be applied. The Pollinator Pathway is a grassroots movement made up of volunteers from conservation organizations such as land trusts, watershed associations, garden clubs, and nature centers as well as town conservation commissions, schools, and libraries. The project's goal is to encourage the addition of native pollinator-friendly plants and the avoidance of pesticides to the extent possible in an effort to restore our region's pollinator habitat, which is currently badly fragmented and often laden with pesticides which harm pollinators.

Despite the banning of retail neonicotinoids with the passage of the Pollinator Protection Act in 2016, landscapers and municipalities still have access to pesticides containing this substance, which has been shown to be extremely harmful to bees and other pollinators. Towns need to have the ability to protect important habitat and waterways from these and other harmful substances. The Pollinator Pathway began in Wilton two years ago in response to statistics such as these:

- Monarch butterfly populations are down over 90% in the last 20 years, *National Wildlife Federation*
- The US has seen a 30% overwinter colony loss annually for honey bees over the last 10 years, *US Dept of Agriculture*
- Globally insect populations have seen stark declines, referred to by the New York Times as the Insect Apocalypse, which has come to light through studies like the German one that shows a 76% decline in all flying insects since 1989, *Krefeld Entomological Society, Dusseldorg*

Since 2017 the Pollinator Pathway has grown from one town to over 25 towns in CT and NY and is growing by the day. The Pathway educational events and volunteer plantings have drawn over 2500 participants in the last year alone because there exists a collective alarm about the decline in pollinator populations. The citizens of CT have shown they are ready to take action and to see their representatives take action to reverse insect population declines. Without insects, we cannot survive. This issue is about more than

saving butterflies because they are beautiful, it is about avoiding a collapse of our food systems and protecting human health.

Please help us continue our work by supporting SB 76 and giving towns the ability to manage the pesticides in their own landscapes in order to protect pollinators and people.

Sincerely,

The Pollinator Pathway Steering Committee