



# Pollinator Pathway

*Supporting pesticide-free corridors of native plants for pollinators*

February 23, 2022

Re: SB 120 AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF CHLORPYRIFOS ON GOLF COURSES AND NEONICOTINOIDS FOR NONAGRICULTURAL USE.

Dear Chairman Cohen, Chairman Gresko, and honorable members of the Environment Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the 90 Connecticut towns on the Pollinator Pathway in support of SB 120 AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF CHLORPYRIFOS ON GOLF COURSES AND NEONICOTINOIDS FOR NONAGRICULTURAL USE. The mission of the Pollinator Pathway is to engage communities to work together to reverse declines in pollinator populations by restoring pesticide-free native habitat.

We applaud the passage of the 2016 Pollinator Protection Act (PA 16-17) which made CT a leader in pollinator protections. Since that time, however, CT has fallen behind neighboring states, including New York (bill pending), New Jersey, and Maine, which have more effective restrictions on neonicotinoids, a group of pesticides shown to be highly toxic to pollinators, birds, and aquatic species, and which also pose threats to human health. The 2016 Pollinator Protection Act prohibits the retail sale of neonicotinoids (defined as including restrictions of sulfoxaflor and flupyradifurone--both highly toxic to bees--but not acetamiprid or thiacloprid--not highly toxic to bees), but allows use of those pesticides by certified pesticide applicators, which includes most lawn services. We support SB 120 which will help ensure that the harmful pesticides named in the 2016 Act will be kept off of CT lawns entirely.

We know from New Jersey, which has a digital, searchable system for tracking pesticide permits, that the vast majority of neonic use has been on lawns—NJ certified pesticide applicators applied 30,000 pounds of these pesticides in 2016. CT needs a digital system so policy makers and citizens can know which pesticides are being used, in what quantities, and where. In the meantime, we also know from hundreds of studies, over 1000 of which were recently reviewed in a report by Cornell University, that neonics are harmful to the environment and are directly linked to sharp declines in bird and pollinator populations. The [Cornell report](#) presents data that indicate that neonicotinoids used on turf grass containing weedy flowers result in exposures that are likely to impact honey bee reproduction in 100% of cases. CT beekeepers lost 65.7% of their hives last year, the third heaviest losses in the US, according to the [Bee Informed Colony Loss Map](#). The Cornell Report also includes a recent worldwide meta-analysis of in-hive pesticide residue studies which found that, under current use patterns, five insecticides pose substantial risk to bees: thiamethoxam, phosmet,



# Pollinator Pathway

*Supporting pesticide-free corridors of native plants for pollinators*

chlorpyrifos, imidacloprid, and clothianidin. Four of those five insecticides—three neonics and chlorpyrifos—are addressed in SB 120.

The need for digitalizing CT's pesticide records came to our attention when we learned about a FOIA request and a manual search through boxes of paper pesticide permit filings in 2019 that revealed 90% of the neurotoxin chlorpyrifos used in our state is used on golf courses. This extremely harmful pesticide has been banned federally from use on food products because of its effects on human health and the environment, including pollinators, wildlife, and water quality. Many of the CT golf courses listed as using chlorpyrifos are along the coast and along our rivers. By eliminating cosmetic use on golf courses, we could eliminate almost all use of chlorpyrifos in CT, thereby protecting our environment from this extremely harmful neurotoxin, known to affect the nervous systems and the brains in babies and children and to harm wildlife and water quality.

The Pollinator Pathway community enthusiastically supports the recommendations put forth by the State Pollinator Advisory Committee this month including the need for the revival of the Pesticide Advisory Council and for this group to report annually to the Environment Committee. (The Pesticide Advisory Council has not met in 29 years). We also support recommendations for more funding and staff at the pesticide division of DEEP. In addition, we advocate for acting now to strengthen restrictions on the pesticides addressed in the 2016 Pollinator Protection Act. Making these pesticides "restricted use" in 2016 banned retail sales of these products but allowed continued use by lawncare companies. The 2016 goal of keeping these harmful poisons off of lawns has not changed. The legal protections need strengthening now to achieve that result. The science is robust on this issue. It's time to make those protections more complete.

We need to act now to limit the use of these neonics and chlorpyrifos for cosmetic purposes in Connecticut. Achieving uniform-looking lawns and golf courses is simply not worth the cost of losing our birds, bees, butterflies, and fish—not to mention harming human health.

Thank you for the chance to submit these comments for consideration.

Sincerely,

Louise Washer  
Pollinator Pathway Pesticide Committee