



Pollinator FRIENDLY ALLIANCE
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RE: Support for bills HF766, HF670, HF408, HF1450; small steps to protect Minnesota environment, clean water, our food source, pollinator, wildlife and human health.

Date: April 2, 2021

To: Minnesota House of Representatives, Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

[Pollinator Friendly Alliance](http://www.pollinatorfriendly.org) is a Minnesota conservation organization with a membership of citizens, scientists, businesses, farmers, land managers and ecologists from around Minnesota. We urge state legislators to support these four bills which are small steps to protect clean water, our food source, pollinator, wildlife and human health.

The fact is, there is overwhelming science, support and evidence showing water contamination, food contamination, lethal and sublethal effects to pollinators, birds and wildlife. There is no question-pesticides are everywhere. The science is here and has been for years - we need to take big actions and make systemic changes to agriculture and pesticide use now if we have any chance of preserving this world for future generations. Today we are not asking for big changes – these are small responsible steps in the right direction.

In Minnesota, organic and sustainable farmers, citizens, business and community leaders support the small steps being proposed with these four bills. Some countries and U.S. states have already banned neonicotinoid, chlorpyrifos and dicamba pesticides. These are not big asks.

HF766 is a bill to require better stewardship of corn and soybean pesticide coated seed with a caution statement on the coated seed bag label. Currently, there are not adequate federal or state safeguards for the health of people and the environment from pesticide contamination from coated seed nor is pesticide coated seed regulated as a pesticide in Minnesota. When this bill was heard in the Ag committee, the Department of Agriculture testified regarding what is going on in Mead NE, that “as far as we know there are no restrictions on this in Minnesota.” And it is “tough to say if anyone is actually doing this in Minnesota.” And “it is not in the law that there is anything against doing it.”

An ethanol plant in Mead NE used treated seeds to make ethanol with disastrous and costly contamination results that may take years to clean up. HF766 will require rulemaking for the safe and lawful disposal of unwanted or unused pesticide coated or treated seed; it will ban neonic coated seed from being used or sold for food, feed, oil or ethanol; and calls for a treated seed disposal stewardship program for unused neonic coated or treated seed along with better labeling.

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 is contaminated. Suggested best practices are not going to protect us or

wildlife and the environment. A law is needed to require proper stewarding of pesticide-coated seed.

HF670 is a state ban on the highly toxic pesticide, chlorpyrifos, which was going to be federally banned but is still used in Minnesota. Chlorpyrifos are implicated in brain disorders of children and highly toxic to animals, pollinators and contaminates drinking water.

Chlorpyrifos is an organophosphate pesticide known for its damaging effects on the human nervous system. These neurological effects pose especially elevated risks for children as their brains and nervous systems develop. Chlorpyrifos contamination of air and drinking water is also of concern; the state of Minnesota has named the pesticide a “**chemical of concern**” for this reason, and the **U.S. EPA** noted that chlorpyrifos use poses “drinking water exposure concerns in small sensitive watersheds.” For animals and pollinators that are highly sensitive to chlorpyrifos, exposure to minute concentrations can be lethal. The EPA indicates that a single application of chlorpyrifos poses significant risks to air, water, humans and animals.

HF408 proposes a small pesticide regulation fee increase of 0.1 % to be allocated to pollinator research at the University of Minnesota including research on pesticide, parasite and climate disruption impacts on pollinators. The University would also use general fund dollars to study at the threats posed to pets and humans from pesticide collars evidenced by pet deaths and human, especially child illness in Minnesota and nationally as confirmed by the EPA.

HF1450 This bill will increase the gross sales fee by 0.1% to create a dicamba compensation program at MDA to compensate for damages caused by dicamba 2-4D drift.

Though introduced in the 1960s, dicamba had been little-used due to its propensity to volatilize and drift, damaging neighbors' crops and habitat restorations. In approving the new uses, the EPA defied numerous warnings that the pesticide would cause far more widespread drift damage than ever before. From 2017 to 2020 farmers across the nation reported thousands of dicamba drift episodes causing damage to millions of acres of soybeans as well as vegetables, fruit trees, gardens and residential trees. For small specialty crops, a small amount of drift can cause huge losses.

We urge you to support these four bills: small steps in the right direction for Minnesota farmers, beekeepers, consumers, and citizens.

Thank you,
Laurie Schneider, Executive Director,
and the Members of the Board of Directors
Pollinator Friendly Alliance
www.pollinatorfriendly.org

Selected support references:

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March 1, 2021, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

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