

Dear Representative Drummond,

I am writing to urge your support of House Bill 19. Bees and other pollinators are declining at alarming rates, and the science continues to link their losses to the use of nicotine-based insecticides called neonicotinoids. We need to take swift action by suspending the use of these chemicals in Alaska.

As an Organic Gardening Coordinator, I have firsthand proof that growing food plants does not necessitate the use of pesticides, and can instead be helped by bee-friendly organic methods and techniques. I run a backyard gardening program in Anchorage called Yarducopia. We grow a wide variety of vegetables organically on over 2000 sf of land a year. We rely on interplanting to confuse and repel harmful insects while attracting beneficial ones, observation and early intervention, providing sufficient nutrients and water for strong plants, and other organic methods to successfully deter pests. Our ability to thrive, while not harming the bees and other essential service-providers in nature, is only limited by our ability to observe and our creativity. We can begin by identifying the practices, such as the use of neonicotinoids, which cause unacceptable levels of harm and stopping them. A wide variety of proven techniques are then available to manage pest problems in a better way.

I urge you to support this bill and pass it today.

Thank you.

Michelle M. Wilber

Organic Gardening Coordinator,

Yarducopia – a program of Alaska Community Action on Toxics