



Representative Harriet Drummond

House Bill 19 "Ban Neonicotinoid Pesticides"

Native bees, imported honeybees, and other pollinators are crucial for Alaska's food production. Honey bees and other pollinators are responsible for 1 out of every 3 bites of food we eat. A relatively new class of pesticide, neonicotinoids, are known to be harmful to those animals. House Bill 19 would limit the use of neonicotinoid pesticides to only be used on crops housed entirely within a greenhouse. Neonicotinoids are the first new class of insecticides introduced in the last 50 years, and the neonicotinoid imidacloprid is currently the most widely used insecticide in the world.

Globally, bee populations have been in alarming decline since 2006. Neonicotinoids are widely regarded as a significant contributing factor in hive collapse. Just this year the U.S. listed the first bumble bee species as endangered. In addition to killing bees outright, research shows even low levels of neonicotinoids can impair bees' ability to find their way back to the hive, collect food, produce new queens and mount an effect immune response.

This legislation would protect both agriculture and wild plants that rely on pollinators. The bill aims to prevent the spread of these pesticides before they impact Alaskan agriculture. Over two-thirds of the farmers involved with the Alaska Grown program grow crops that depend on bees for pollination. Alaska has 49 different species of bees including the native bumble bee which is an essential pollinator for Alaska's berry species. Alaska farms import over 9 million European honey bees each year for producing local honey.

The bill does not restrict neonicotinoids found in products used for ornamental lawn plants or plants grown in a greenhouse. The sole purpose of the bill is to prevent these pesticides known to harm pollinators from being used in seed treatments or applied to crops outside a greenhouse.