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March 15, 2017

Representative Harriet Drummond
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Representative Drummond:

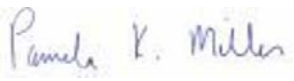
I am writing on behalf of Alaska Community Action on Toxics, a statewide non-profit environmental health research and advocacy organization. Thank you for your introduction of HB 19, "*An Act limiting the application of neonicotinoid pesticides*." We strongly endorse this bill as an important measure to protect bees and other pollinators so crucial to a majority of our crops that serve as vital food resources.

Neonicotinoid pesticides have long been associated with harm to bees and other pollinators. In 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the first risk assessment of neonicotinoid pesticides and concluded that they can cause significant harm to honeybees. Increasing independent peer-reviewed scientific evidence has demonstrated that the widespread use of the dangerous class of neonicotinoid pesticides is a factor in the precipitous decline of bees and other pollinators. Studies have shown serious adverse effects to bees including navigational ability, mobility, and reproduction. Even small exposures to neonicotinoid pesticides can damage bees' ability to gather pollen, impair their memory and social behavior, weaken their immune systems, and harm colony health and longevity. Scientists have shown that exposure to certain neonicotinoid pesticides reduces bees' immune defenses, promoting infections associated with such diseases as deformed wing virus.

Recent scientific studies have shown that chronic exposure of honeybees to environmental levels of neonicotinoid pesticides can impair their learning and memory. Another study reported that wild bees exposed to neonicotinoid-coated seeds had reduced nesting and were not successful in building brood cells for new larvae. In addition, chronic exposure to one of the most commonly used neonicotinoid pesticides (imidacloprid) was found to be associated with reduced brood production, reduced colony growth, and an 85% reduction in the production of bumblebee queens. Neonicotinoid pesticides are also found to have adverse effects on many other non-target and beneficial organisms, including butterflies, birds, and aquatic insects. There are also emerging concerns about the possible adverse neurodevelopmental effects of neonicotinoid pesticides on children.

We believe the evidence supports the need for urgent legislative action. We urge swift passage of this bill to suspend the use of these harmful chemicals in Alaska.

Sincerely,



Pamela K. Miller, Biologist and Executive Director