

S.1856 (Hoylman-Sigal)/A.3226 (Glick)

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BILL S.1856 (Hoylman-Sigal)/A.3226 (Glick)
SUBJECT Pesticide Use Prohibitions
DATE May 23, 2023
OPPOSE

Referred to as “The Birds and Bees Protection Act,” this bill would prohibit, effective January 1, 2026, the sale or use of corn, soybean or wheat seeds coated or treated with pesticides with the active ingredients clothianidin, imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, dinotefuran, or acetamiprid, but allows the Department of Environmental Conservation commissioner to temporarily suspend this prohibition if it is determined that the lack of seeds without such treatment would result in undue financial hardship for farmers

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The Business Council's diverse membership includes businesses in a number of sectors that would be impacted by this bill, including agricultural production and pesticide production and application.

Seed treatments were created to reduce pesticide use, and the application to seeds results in the reduction in pesticides that are readily accessible to wildlife, including birds and bees. Moreover, there have been no bird fatalities in the U.S. confirmed to be linked to neonic-treated seeds, and lab tests by the U.S. Geological Survey showed no adverse impact on birds that consumed neonic-treated seeds. Likewise, bee populations have actually stabilized as neonic use has increased, showing the effect of efforts to control the varroa mite, which are widely recognized as having the greatest adverse impact on bee populations.

Concerns have been raised that the effect of this bill would be counterproductive, resulting in an increase in pesticide use, as it would prohibited the targeted application of pesticides on seeds pre-planting, and instead result in the field application of pesticides, using more material in less precise manner to accomplish the same objectives, in addition to using additional equipment and fuel necessary for "traditional" application of pesticides.

This legislation is a bad precedent, ignoring the regulatory review function of federal and state agencies on pesticide safety. Moreover, it would be counterproductive in resulting in increased pesticide use, and increased energy use for food production.

For these reasons, we oppose adoption of S.1856/A.3226.

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