



EANY SUPPORTS

Birds and Bees Protection Act



Memo #18

[S1856 \(Hoylman-Sigal\)](#)

[A7640 \(Glick\)](#)

Explanation:

This bill would ban the sale or use of corn, soybean, and wheat seeds coated with toxic neonicotinoids (“neonics”) beginning in 2026. The bill will also prohibit the use of these toxic insecticides on turf and ornamental plants beginning in 2025. The use and application of neonics threatens the health and viability of New York State's agricultural production, food systems, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

Neonics are extremely harmful insecticides that can kill pollinators, birds, and fish. Neonics have been linked to colony collapse disorder, a disturbing trend of massive bee die-offs. Beekeepers in New York [have lost over 40%](#) of their bee colonies every year for the past decade. The collapse of bees threatens the agricultural production of apples, pumpkins, squash and tomatoes in New York. These crops contribute nearly half a billion in economic output in our state each year and support thousands of jobs and much-needed tax revenue.

These insecticides also work their way into ponds and nearby waterways through runoff. Neonics have appeared in roughly 30% of Long Island groundwater samples and frequently in state surface waters at levels expected to cause [“ecosystem-wide damage.”](#) Once in a body of water, these toxic insecticides are ingested by insects, ultimately having detrimental impacts on fish and birds up the food chain.

A major [report](#) by Cornell University concluded that the most common uses of neonics in New York, which pose substantial risks to pollinators, provide little to no benefits to users and are easily replaced by safer alternatives. This bill targets these high-cost, low-benefit uses for elimination. This bill will help stop approximately 80-90% of the total outdoor neonic use from entering the environment.

Following the lead of other states and the European Union, New York should take the commonsense step to ban the most common and harmful uses of neonics and protect the pollinator species and food systems we depend on.

Summary:

This bill amends the environmental conservation law to ban and prohibit certain uses of neonicotinoids, including on certain seed coatings by 2026 and for turf and ornamental uses by 2025. In addition, the bill commissions a study to be conducted on the feasible alternatives to toxic pesticide use to be submitted to the Governor and legislature no later than January 1, 2025. The bill also provides the commissioner of the Department of Environment Conservation, after consulting with the commissioner of Agriculture and Markets, the authority to temporarily suspend the ban if there's a lack of a commercially available alternative for a specific seed; and allows the DEC to provide a use exemption if there is an environmental emergency that no other less harmful pesticide could effectively address.