NH AUDUBON

Protecting New Hampshire's natural environment for wildlife and for people.

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January 13, 2026

The Honorable Judy Aron
House Environment and Agriculture Committee
Granite Place Room 153
Concord, NH 03301

Re: Support for HB 1431 restricting the use of neonicotinoid pesticides.

Dear Chair Aron and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1431 on behalf of NH Audubon. We are a statewide conservation organization dedicated to protecting New Hampshire's environment for wildlife and for people.

HB 1431 restricts the use of neonicotinoid pesticides by limiting applications to specific exempted situations. Neonicotinoids, often and hereafter referred to as neonics, are a relatively new class of insecticides that were developed in the early 1990s to replace DDT and related compounds. These chemicals are designed to mimic the effects of nicotine, and work by binding to nerves, overexciting the nervous system and causing paralysis and eventually death.

Neonics are broad-spectrum insecticides that act by permanently binding to insect nerves, overexciting the nervous system and leading to paralysis and death. They are soluble in water and readily move through the environment, resulting in widespread exposure of non-target organisms. They are used as sprays on crops, turf, and gardens, as well as in seed coatings for some garden vegetables (e.g., squash, lettuce, tomatoes, broccoli, sweet corn) as well as for the commercial crops addressed in HB 1038.

Insects are by far the most diverse group of animals on earth. Public awareness tends to focus on charismatic species, especially butterflies, and annoying ones, such as mosquitoes and blackflies. Meanwhile, out-of-sight and out-of-mind, multitudes of insect species are performing critical ecological services that support the rest of life on this planet. Insects are important food sources for many wildlife species and provide the crucial functions of pollination, decomposition, nutrient cycling, and biological control. Broad-spectrum insecticides pose serious risks to food webs and ecosystem services.

Neonics are highly toxic to honeybees and native pollinators and contribute to the phenomenon known as colony collapse disorder, which has been decimating honeybee populations since its first recognition in 2006. Pollinator declines have direct economic impacts on many agricultural enterprises and potentially serious consequences for human food supplies.

While neonic impacts on pollinator populations have generated considerable research and publicity, these insecticides have widespread negative sub-lethal effects on non-target organisms, from beneficial soil bacteria to vertebrates. Impacts vary among wildlife species and neonic compound and may be direct (e.g., affecting physiology) or indirect (e.g., affecting food supply). Researchers have documented reductions in fertilization success, embryo size, eggshell thickness, hatching success, and chick survival in birds, and increases in miscarriages, stillbirths, and premature births and reduced offspring weights in mammals.

Recent global declines in insect populations, dubbed the "Insect Apolcalypse," have caused international alarm. Enacting HB 1431 will be an important step in reducing the use of pesticides that contribute to these declines.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 1431. We strongly urge the Committee to vote this bill **Ought to Pass**.

Sincerely,

Carol R. Foss, Ph.D.
Senior Advisor for Science and Policy

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