TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT** OF
SB 963 AAC NEONICOTINOIDS FOR NONAGRICULTURAL USE.
February 15, 2023

To: Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Lopes and Rep. Gresko, Vice Chairs Sen. Hochadel and Rep. Palm, Ranking Members Sen. Harding and Rep. Callahan, Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Lori Brown, Executive Director, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of CTLCV, thank you for the opportunity to comment **in support of SB 963** that will restrict the use of harmful neonicotinoids in the state.

Neonicotinoids (neonics) are a neurotoxic pesticide linked to massive bee and insect losses around the globe and increasingly to vast water and soil contamination, ecosystem-wide harms, and human health concerns.

Neonics are toxic, persistent, and everywhere. A 2015 study by the U.S. Geological Survey found neonic pollution in more than 50% of the streams it sampled nationwide. Many neonics are applied whether or not there is a pest problem, which can actually reduce crop yields and damage soil health by killing off pollinators, beneficial bugs and microbes, and predators of insect pests.

Neonics harm wildlife. Scientific evidence links neonicotinoid use to massive bee and bird population loss. In CT, honeybee colonies have been dying off rapidly, dropping 32% between 2021 to 2022. Eating just one neonic-treated seed is enough to kill some songbirds, and even at low doses, neonics can have devastating effects on birds.

Neonics affect human health. The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention shows that half the U.S. population is regularly exposed to neonics and there is concerning research linking them to potential neurological, developmental, and reproductive harms.

Neonicotinoids are indiscriminate and "systemic," meaning they permeate plants—turning their leaves, nectar, pollen, and fruit toxic. This is especially the case for seeds coated in neonics. Typically for neonic-coated seeds, only 2-5% of the chemicals are absorbed, leaving the other 95% to persist in soil for years, where they are easily carried long distances by rain or irrigation water, contaminating nearby ecosystems.

CTLCV strongly supports SB 963, but we recommend expanding the language of the bill to include neonic-coated seeds, which pose serious threats to wildlife, ecosystems, and waterways. See below for proposed language.

New Jersey and Maine have already taken steps to restrict neonics and banned them for all ornamental uses. New York is currently working to pass similar legislation. In fact, many states are working to ban all systemic pesticides from unnecessary uses. *Now is the time for Connecticut to take action*.

Thank you for considering legislation to protect wildlife, pets, pollinators and human health from these dangerous chemicals.

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Proposed language to include in the bill regarding the use of neonicotinoid-coated seeds:

"Beginning January 1, 2025, a person shall not sell, possess, use or distribute within the state any corn, soybean or wheat seeds coated or treated with pesticides with the active ingredients clothianidin, imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, dinotefuran, or acetamiprid; provided, however, that the governor may, by issuing an executive order, temporarily suspend the provisions of this paragraph at any time based on the governor's determination, after consulting with the commissioners of agriculture and markets and the department, that there is a lack of commercially available seed that has not been treated with the active ingredients clothianidin, imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, dinotefuran or acetamiprid or the purchase of seed that complies with the requirements of this paragraph would result in undue financial hardship to agricultural producers any such temporary suspension shall specify the type of seed included."

For more information, please follow link or QR code to view CTLCV's Briefing Paper on Neonicotinoids.