

Guide for Submitting Testimony in Support of HB 6916

Thank you for taking the time to submit testimony. At St. Patrick-St. Anthony (SPSA), we are committed to acts of charity that serve those in need, but as Franciscan Catholics, we also recognize the importance of advocacy for systemic change that protects creation. This bill is an opportunity for us to put our values into action by supporting policies that safeguard our environment, and the creatures entrusted to our care.

To make this easier, we have put together this guide with an explanation of HB 6916, four different introductions, and a menu of reasons you can use in your testimony.

What HB 6916 Does

Connecticut House Bill 6916 (HB 6916) aims to restrict the use of neonicotinoid pesticides in both commercial and agricultural applications. Specifically, the bill seeks to ban the use of neonicotinoids for non-agricultural purposes, closing the loophole that still allows licensed professionals to apply them on lawns, golf courses, and public spaces despite prior restrictions on consumer purchases. It also prohibits the sale and use of neonicotinoid-coated seeds, including those used for corn, wheat, and soybeans, which are a major source of pollinator exposure.

Many people assume neonicotinoids have already been banned for non-commercial use in Connecticut, and to some extent, that is true. As of 2023, consumers can no longer purchase neonicotinoid products for residential use. However, licensed pesticide applicators can still use these chemicals in non-agricultural settings—meaning they continue to contaminate soil, water, and pollinator habitats.

By eliminating these loopholes, HB 6916 ensures that neonicotinoids are no longer used in ways that threaten pollinators, birds, and ecosystems. The bill also moves Connecticut toward safer pest management practices in agriculture by banning neonicotinoid-treated seeds.

How to Submit Testimony

1. Identify yourself (your name, where you live, and that you are a member of SPSA).
 2. Choose one of the four introductions that speaks to you.
 3. Select at least three reasons from the list below to explain why you support HB 6916, including responses to any opposition arguments.
 4. Feel free to cut, paste, edit, or add your own thoughts to personalize your testimony.
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Step 1: Greeting and Identifying Yourself

Senator Lopes, Representative Parker, Vice Chairs Hochadel and Bumgardner, and Members of the Environment Committee,

My name is [Your Name], and I am a member of St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church in Hartford, Connecticut. I reside in [Your Town], and I submit this testimony in strong support of HB 6916. As a young adult, I recognize that the decisions made today will determine the health of our environment and the stability of our future. This bill presents an opportunity to take meaningful action to protect Connecticut's ecosystems, agriculture, and biodiversity.

Step 2: Choose One of the Four Introductions

1. Science and Environmental Impact Approach

The decline of pollinators is not just a concern for environmentalists—it is a documented ecological crisis. Research has shown that neonicotinoids are responsible for widespread losses in bee populations, the poisoning of butterflies, and the deaths of nearly three billion birds across North America since 1970. These pesticides do not simply wash away; they persist in soil and water, contaminating entire ecosystems. If we continue to allow their use, we risk further disrupting the delicate web of life that sustains us all.

2. Personal Connection Approach

Growing up, I was fascinated by the natural world. I remember watching bees pollinate flowers, hearing birds sing in the early morning, and seeing monarch butterflies flutter across fields. But now, these moments are becoming increasingly rare. The more I have learned, the more I realize that human actions—especially the use of harmful pesticides—are driving these creatures toward extinction. If we do not act now, future generations may never experience the richness of biodiversity that we have taken for granted.

3. Food and Agriculture Approach

Our food system is directly dependent on pollinators. Bees, butterflies, and birds play a crucial role in fertilizing crops, ensuring that plants produce the fruits, vegetables, and nuts that sustain us. Without these species, food production will decline, prices will rise, and farmers will face mounting challenges. Studies have shown that neonicotinoids provide little agricultural benefit yet have devastating consequences for pollinators. Connecticut must act now to protect its farms and food supply.

4. Urgency and Consequences Approach

The impact of neonicotinoids extends far beyond pollinators. These pesticides have been found in more than half of the streams tested nationwide, demonstrating their widespread contamination of water sources. They persist in the environment for years, affecting not only bees and butterflies but also fish, amphibians, and birds. The longer we allow their use, the harder it will be to reverse the damage they have already caused. This is not a distant problem—it is happening now, and it demands immediate action.

Step 3: Pick at Least Three Reasons to Support HB 6916

Please choose at least three of the following reasons to include in your testimony.

Core Environmental and Scientific Reasons

- Pollinators are essential to food security. Bees and butterflies pollinate nearly 75% of flowering plants and one-third of the crops we consume. Without them, food production will decline, leading to shortages and increased costs.
- Bird populations are in crisis. Since 1970, North America has lost nearly three billion birds, with pesticide exposure being a major factor. A single neonicotinoid-coated seed is enough to kill a songbird.
- Neonicotinoids make plants toxic. These chemicals are absorbed into the plant's vascular system, poisoning nectar and pollen. Pollinators ingest these toxins, leading to paralysis, disorientation, and death.
- Water contamination is widespread. A 2015 U.S. Geological Survey study found that more than half of sampled streams contained neonicotinoid contamination, proving their persistence in the environment.
- Neonicotinoids are still being used in Connecticut. While consumers can no longer buy these pesticides, licensed applicators can still apply them in non-agricultural settings, including lawns, golf courses, and public spaces. HB 6916 closes this loophole.

Refuting the Opposition's Arguments

- Banning neonicotinoids will not harm farmers. Studies show that these pesticides provide little benefit in increasing crop yields. Many farmers in states where neonicotinoids have been restricted have successfully transitioned to safer pest control methods.
 - A ban will not increase food prices. The real threat to food production is pollinator loss. Without bees and butterflies, food yields will decline, causing long-term economic damage.
 - There is overwhelming scientific proof of harm. Hundreds of studies link neonicotinoids to pollinator decline, and the European Union and Canada have already banned them after reviewing extensive research. Connecticut should follow their lead.
 - Homeowners do not need these pesticides. Many safer alternatives exist for lawns and gardens that do not contribute to pollinator die-offs.
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Step 4: Conclusion

We have a responsibility to protect the natural world that sustains us. The loss of pollinators and birds is not just an ecological tragedy but a human one as well. The choices we make today will determine the health of our ecosystems and the stability of our food supply for generations to come. Passing HB 6916 is a necessary step toward ensuring a more sustainable future. I urge you to support this bill and take meaningful action to ban neonicotinoids.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to protecting Connecticut's environment.

Name

Address