

# City of Boulder

## A Resolution Concerning the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides in the City of Boulder

**WHEREAS**, neonicotinoids, one of the most widely used classes of insecticides, are systemic, persistent neurotoxins that translocate throughout all parts of plants, including leaves, pollen and nectar; and

**WHEREAS**, a large and growing body of independent, peer-reviewed scientific studies demonstrate that neonicotinoids adversely impact beneficial soil invertebrates and avian and aquatic organisms, contaminate water resources and soils, and contaminate the pollen and nectar that is gathered by pollinators; and

**WHEREAS**, studies have shown that neonicotinoids are endangering pollinators through acute poisonings, as well as through chronic sublethal exposures, which can weaken immune defenses, causing increased susceptibility to natural stressors such as parasites, pathogens (bacterial, viral and fungal diseases), and poor nutrition due to habitat loss and industrial agricultural systems. Studies have shown other adverse effects associated with neonicotinoids, including delays in larval development, decreases in queen survival and negative effects on feeding, navigational, and reproductive behaviors; and

**WHEREAS**, the global loss of pollinators is alarmingly high, with commercial honeybee colonies experiencing as much as 50 percent over-winter losses each year since 2006, and with a dramatic decline in populations of wild bees, butterflies, birds and other pollinators; and

**WHEREAS**, threats to pollinators concern the entire food system, where pollination services provided by honeybees and other essential pollinators account for one in every three bites of food and are valued at \$20 to \$30 billion in agricultural production annually in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, municipal, residential and commercial use of neonicotinoid and other systemic pesticides on home gardens, public parks, school grounds and other local and municipal areas pose unacceptable risks to bees, other pollinators and aquatic invertebrates, and furthermore, their introduction into the environment is often unintentional and/or inadvertent, since labeling is not required for treated nursery plants; and,

**WHEREAS**, this same municipal, residential and commercial use of neonicotinoid and other systemic pesticides on home gardens, public parks, school grounds and other local and municipal areas may pose health risks to humans; and

**WHEREAS**, the use of hazardous and persistent pesticides, including systemic neonicotinoids, is not necessary to create and maintain green lawns and landscapes, home or public gardens, or open spaces, given the availability of viable alternative practices and products; and

**WHEREAS**, responding to scientific studies and findings that neonicotinoids pose unacceptable hazards to pollinators, the European Union in 2013 instituted a two-year moratorium on some uses of neonicotinoids, while U.S. cities and counties, including Eugene, OR, Thurston County, Spokane and Seattle, WA, Shorewood and St. Louis Park, MN, and Portland, OR, have instituted resolutions and/or bans against the municipal use of neonicotinoids, while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has banned the use of neonicotinoids on all 150 million acres of its National Wildlife Refuge System; and

**WHEREAS**, two neighborhoods, two churches and more than 500 households in the City of Boulder and Boulder County have already demonstrated the feasibility of neighbors coming together to improve the habitat of bees and other pollinators; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to local resident lobbying, 17 retailers and 10 lawn care and landscaping companies in the City of Boulder and Boulder County have already pledged to offer and disclose or label Bee Safe garden products, ranging from organic pesticides and fertilizers to plants and landscaping materials.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BOULDER:**

**Section 1:** That the city will not apply neonicotinoid-active ingredients for any purpose on its city-managed parks, playing fields, rights of way, along watersheds and ditches, open space lands, public trees and landscapes, or in its buildings or other areas under its ownership and jurisdiction, with exceptions only being allowed under a rigorous, transparent exemption process for the application of neonicotinoids for the purposes of (1) a well-defined research study; or (2) when the life or health of a valuable or significant tree is threatened and neonicotinoid application is the least environmentally impactful option.

**Section 2:** That the city hereby urges all related parties, both public and private, at the county, state and federal levels to suspend neonicotinoids for use in seed treatment, soil application or foliar treatment on bee attractive plants, trees and cereals in urban and agricultural settings, until a proper scientific, legal and regulatory review of their impacts on honeybees, other pollinators, natural enemies, and non-target organisms is completed and a full public health and environmental assessment proves their safety.

**Section 3:** That the city will seek to purchase landscaping materials, including plants and seeds, that have not been treated with neonicotinoids and hereby urges all businesses, homeowners and homeowners' associations operating within the city to take steps to ensure that no plants, seeds or products containing neonicotinoids are purchased, sold or used within the city, and that any materials that have been pretreated with neonicotinoid pesticides are fully disclosed to the public with accurate labeling.

**Section 4:** That the city recognizes the importance of pollinators and their services, and will support and actively engage in efforts to educate the broader community about the actions it is taking; and, furthermore, the city will encourage other entities, businesses, schools, neighborhoods and households, and also the county, state and the federal governments to adopt similar policies.