



MEDIA RELEASE

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ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER CALLS NEONICOTINOIDS 'WORSE THAN DDT'

Milton, ON. The Ontario Beekeepers' Association supports the findings of The Annual Report of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, released today. "The report confirms what Ontario beekeepers have been saying about the decline of honey bees and the broader environmental effects of neonicotinoids," said OBA Board Member, Andre Flys. "Although we would have liked a more specific call to action, we are pleased that the Commissioner recognizes the need for 'swift action and dedicated resources to in order to avert a potential ecological and economic crisis.'"

Calling honey bee decline a 'warning sign of a larger ecological problem', the report expresses concern about the degree to which neonicotinoids may accumulate in soil, 'potentially having adverse effects on soil ecosystems and the likelihood of uptake by subsequently planted crops and wild plants.' The report also points out that neonicotinoids are not only persistent in soil and water, but are also 'water soluble and highly mobile within the ecosystems.' Later, the Commissioner and the Minister of the Environment, Glen Murray each confirmed that neonics are 'worse than DDT'.

In response to a question about whether neonicotinoids pose a threat to drinking water, the Commissioner stated that these pesticides 'are far scarier for an ecologist because it is a broad spectrum affecting the insect level of the food chain in a profound way which has huge implications for humans, but not immediately, so it's difficult for the lay person to understand.' "Not so difficult," comments Flys, "it's clear that most Ontarians realize the risks these pesticides pose to our food systems and want them stopped."

In 2013, PMRA declared that the current use of neonicotinoid pesticides in agriculture was 'not sustainable.' Last winter Ontario beekeepers lost 58% of their hives, more than three times the average of the rest of Canadian provinces. Recently, Premier Wynne followed through on her election promise by tasking OMAFRA Minister Leal with developing a regulatory system to address the indiscriminate use of pesticides. "The OBA supports this", Flys says, but cautions, "It's all in the fine print. We'll be working closely with OMAFRA and MOE to ensure that this intent isn't watered down or distorted when push comes to shove. Let's get this done right before Ontario beekeepers go out of business." ***

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