



Media Release – December 13, 2019

Ontario Doing Little to Protect Insect Pollinators

The Government of Ontario is [currently proposing amendments](#) to [O. Reg. 63/09: General](#) made under the [Pesticides Act](#) to reduce complexity and modernize pesticide management in Ontario while ensuring protection of human health and the environment.

The Government of Ontario's amendments are designed to streamline pesticide regulatory requirements and paperwork, such as eliminating the requirement for independent verification of pest pressure and disposing of the annual sales tracking of seed treatment chemicals. These amendments do little to protect endangered insect pollinators or to support the sustainability of Ontario's beekeeping industry.

The production of more than \$900 million worth of Ontario fruits and vegetables depends on insect pollinators: honey bees, bumble bees, wild bees and other wild pollinators. Yet the health of insect pollinators continues to be threatened. Ontario beekeepers suffer high overwinter and spring losses, queen failures, and low honey yields.

Since 1881 the Ontario Beekeepers' Association (OBA) has represented the interests of Ontario beekeepers. **The OBA urges the Government of Ontario to renew its commitment to protecting insect pollinators and to put in place actions and stronger policies to protect all insect pollinators and help sustain a beekeeping industry that is so vital to the production of Ontario fruits and vegetables.**

In 2013, Canada's [Pest Management Regulatory Agency](#) found that the continued use of neonicotinoid (NNI) seed treatments was not sustainable.

In 2015, the Government of Ontario passed [Class 12 legislation](#) to reduce the use of NNIs to the 20 per cent of acreage estimated by crop specialists at the [Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs](#) (OMAFRA) to actually be under pressure by pests targeted by NNIs. As of the last reported crop year, 84,000 kg of NNIs were applied annually as seed treatments and Ontario had achieved only an 18 per cent drop in acreage of treated seeds - far from the 80 per cent reduction targeted by the legislation. As well, industry suppliers report new chemicals are being substituted for NNIs, yet their application has not been tracked or measured.

"It's no surprise that the for-profit pesticide lobby is pressuring the Ontario Government to reduce the regulatory requirements of Class 12 legislation. They're well-funded and powerful," says OBA president André Flys. "The government must stand up to them and protect our insect pollinators or we soon won't have the honey bees and wild bees essential to our food security."

The OBA recommends the Government of Ontario adopt 12 specific actions for the protection of insect pollinators and sustainability of Ontario's beekeeping industry. These include reversing the trend of habitat and forage loss and continued tracking of all seed treatment chemical use so that better, science-based decisions can be made regarding pesticide use in Ontario.

See: [OBA Responds to Bill 132, Better for People, Smarter for Business Act that Proposes Changes to Bees Act & Pesticide Regulations](#)

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