



7/23/2014

Bee Safe Neighborhoods  
[beesafeneighborhoods@zoho.com](mailto:beesafeneighborhoods@zoho.com)  
Boulder, CO 80301

**Re: Support for Bee Safe Neighborhoods**

Dear Bee Safe Neighborhoods,

With nearly 600,000 members and online supporters, Friends of the Earth is a hard-hitting, progressive environmental organization that defends the environment and champions a healthy and just world. We're part of Friends of the Earth International, a federation of groups working in 74 countries on today's most urgent environmental and social issues. Our current campaigns focus on promoting clean energy and solutions to climate change, ensuring the food we eat and products we use are safe for our health and the environment, and protecting marine ecosystems and the people who live and work near them. Our organization is writing to thank Bee Safe Neighborhoods for working to protect essential honey bees and other pollinators from toxic chemicals and to communicate our support for the organization.

Bee Safe Neighborhoods plays an integral role in protecting the bees and other pollinators essential to Colorado's food supply, farming system and the environment. Bees are essential to the production of one out of every three bites of food we eat.<sup>i, ii</sup> In fact, 71 of the 100 crops that provide 90 percent of the world's food—from almonds to tomatoes and strawberries—are pollinated by bees.<sup>iii</sup> Honeybees, in particular, contribute nearly \$20 billion to the U.S. economy<sup>iv</sup> and \$217 billion to the global economy.<sup>v, vi</sup> Yet evidence is mounting that the health and productivity of these critical pollinators, along with many wild pollinators, is declining rapidly. U.S. beekeepers reported winter 2013–2014 hive losses of 23 percent of their hives, with an average over the last eight years of almost 30 percent.<sup>vii</sup> Some beekeepers have lost 100 percent of their operations. This severely jeopardizes the state economy and agricultural system.

A growing body of science has implicated a class of systemic pesticides known as neonicotinoids (neonics) — which are used on 140 crops and for cosmetic use in gardens — as a key factor in recent bee die-offs.<sup>viii</sup> Neonicotinoids can directly kill bees, and sub-lethal exposure increases pollinator vulnerability and decreases natural resilience to external stressors such as pests and pathogens.<sup>ix, x, xi, xii</sup>

In 2013, based on recommendations by the European Food Safety Administration (EFSA), the European Union (EU) voted for a continent-wide suspension of several widely used neonics in order to protect bees. However, in the U.S., the EPA continues to allow neonics on the market without a comprehensive data set on pollinator impacts and despite mounting evidence linking neonics to the death of bees and other essential pollinators. The EPA has also received more than a million public comments urging swift protections for bees, yet the agency has delayed any substantive action until 2016–2019.

With delayed action by EPA and Congress in the U.S., Bee Safe Neighborhoods community organizing work is critical to protect bees and other essential pollinators by moving people, retailers and institutions to not use or sell bee-harming pesticides and move to safer alternatives.

We give Bee Safe Neighborhoods our support and look forward to working with Bee Safe Neighborhoods to protect the small, but important creatures upon which so much of our food and plant life depends.

Sincerely,

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## References

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