



SIERRA CLUB

NORTH STAR CHAPTER

Sierra Club North Star Chapter
2300 Myrtle Avenue, Suite 260
Saint Paul, MN 55114

March 13, 2023

Senate Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee

Minnesota Senate
Minnesota Senate Bldg.
95 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for Senate File 719 “Examination of neonicotinoid impact on game species appropriation.”

Dear Chair Hawj, Vice Chair McEwen and all other Committee Members:

Founded in 1968, the Sierra Club North Star Chapter is a non-profit environmental organization representing over representing over 50,000 members and supporters across Minnesota. The Sierra Club works to safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and litigation.

As a leading grassroots voice working to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment, we empower volunteer leaders to act through environmental advocacy, community organizing, and outdoor exploration. We participate in the administrative process to encourage environmental health and sustainability, long term wildlife and habitat protection, and biodiversity goals.

On January 11, the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee heard and thankfully passed the neonicotinoid impacts study bill House File 206 out of their committee (see: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?f=HF206&y=2023&ssn=0&b=house>).

We join the ten House File 206 authors Representatives Rick Hansen, Heather Edelson, Brad Tabke and seven others and also the five Senate authors Scott Dibble, Fong Hawj, Kelly Morrison, Jennifer McEwen and Lindsey Port on Senate File 719 in their recommendation that the Minnesota Legislature appropriate \$943,000 in fiscal year 2024 from the general fund to the commissioner of natural resources to examine the impacts of neonicotinoid exposure on the reproduction and survival of Minnesota's game species, including deer and prairie chicken (see: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?version=latest&number=SF0719&session=ls93&session_year=&session_number=0).

Our support for the bill is also related to the fact that we are very concerned about the many negative impacts of neonicotinoid insecticides (aka “neonics”) on all mammals (including non-game wildlife species as well as humans), all birds and other animals. A Minnesota study on the two named game species and any others could also help further expose the wider dangers of neonicotinoids – through important facts and insights learned – on even more species, including those that may share the same locations, habitats, and food / water / air sources.

Several of the already completed Minnesota, national and global studies that show the presence and harmful impacts of neonicotinoids were very helpfully listed in the Minnesota Environmental Partnership's important Letter of Support dated January 10, 2023 for House File 206 (<https://www.house.mn.gov/comm/docs/UUf99lJfaEuN2Td8s1ZhVg.pdf>) that was submitted by their Pollinator and Wildlife Coalition of which the Sierra Club North Star Chapter is a member, in addition to being an Associate Member of their entire organization among so many other members (<https://www.mepartnership.org/our-members/>). We ask all on the Committee to also read that important letter.

In addition, it has long been the work of the Sierra Club nationwide to help prevent the degradation of "Wildlife and Native Plants" which is why we support ongoing efforts to ban and/or at least restrict the use of neonicotinoids in Minnesota and the United States which other global government entities, countries and even continents such as Europe have wisely been doing as well.

Among Sierra Club's stated policy and goals in Minnesota and across the country as posted on its national website include achieving much more support and protection for pollinators (<https://www.sierraclub.org/grassroots-network/food-agriculture/pollinators>) as well as for all wildlife and native plants through rehabilitation and restoration of degraded natural landscapes and habitats (which also overlap rural, urban and suburban communities):

Sierra Club Policy on Wildlife & Native Plants – Top Points 1 and 2
(<https://www.sierraclub.org/policy/wildlife/wildlife-and-native-plants>)

The key to wildlife and native plant conservation is the continued existence of diverse natural ecosystems and the preservation of native biodiversity. The Sierra Club is committed to maintaining the world's remaining natural ecosystems, and, where feasible, to the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems. Wildlife, plants, and their ecosystems have value in their own right, as well as value to humans and to the health of the biosphere.

1. Habitat -- Habitat simplification, fragmentation, degradation, and elimination pose the greatest threats to natural ecosystems and biodiversity and must be counteracted by reasonable and effective measures for the long-term preservation of intact ecosystems. Such measures should be incorporated into decisions made by all levels of government. All society should help develop and implement wildlife and native plant conservation measures that protect ecosystems and our wildlife heritage.
2. Wildlife and Native Plant Management -- Within natural ecosystems, natural diversity and abundance of wildlife and plants should be ensured by means that involve a minimum of overt human interference. Ecosystems modified by human activities should be managed to ensure optimum native diversity and numbers of wildlife and plants to natural historic levels where feasible, with emphasis on restoration and rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems to a more natural condition.

For the many reasons described above, we at the Sierra Club North Star Chapter look forward to progress and passage of Minnesota laws that help more people and government entities to understand, prevent and reverse the many harmful impacts of neonicotinoids on wildlife, people & ecosystems, including through passage of Senate File 719.

Thank you,

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