



March 25, 2021

Dear Committee Members,

Good day and thank you for this opportunity. My name is James C. Murphy, Sustainability Coordinator at Rhode Island College and beekeeper at the RIC Bee Education Center. This year marks the tenth year that Rhode Island College has maintained an apiary on its campus for the sole purpose of educating our students, faculty and staff as well as the general public on the importance of the honey bee's role in pollinating Rhode Island's agriculture.

Bee populations are declining world-wide. Although honey bees have garnered much of the press, native bee populations and other pollinators such as butterflies are also declining. These species are vitally important within local ecosystems. Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) is a major cause of honey bee losses and occurs when adult bees flee the hive leaving the Queen and developing bee brood behind. Without worker bees, the hive is destined to fail. There are a number of factors that contribute to CCD and the decline of bee populations but the neonicotinoid pesticide is one of the most prominent.

As a creature, honey bees are quite sensitive to most classes of pesticides. Even low doses of these compounds can adversely affect honey bees and therefore the hive itself. The nicotine-based neonicotinoid affects the honey bee's ability to navigate. So, while honeybees are out searching for nectar and pollen and become exposed to the neonicotinoid pesticide they are unable to find their way back to the hive. As more and more honeybees are exposed to the neonicotinoid fewer and fewer find their way back to the hive thereby weakening the overall health of the colony. While Rhode Island College does not use pesticides on its grounds honey bees travel in a three miles radius of the hive so exposure is still a risk.

Rhode Island College supports bill H 5641 which would ban the use of neonicotinoid pesticides within the State of Rhode Island. It is our hope that Rhode

Island will join the growing number of states including Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, Minnesota and Maryland who have all banned the use of the neonicotinoid pesticides. In 2018 The European Union banned this pesticide on all field crops. Since 2016 Canada has been phasing out all three types of the pesticide in agricultural use. There is also support of the Environmental Protection Agency which since 2017 protects bees from agricultural pesticides while beekeepers are providing pollination services. Thank you for your consideration of bill H 5641.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JCMurphy'.

James C. Murphy

Sustainability Coordinator

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

Facilities and Operations
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence, RI 02908-1991
(401) 456-8799 (Office)
(401) 456-4676 (Fax)
E-mail: jmurphy2@ric.edu