

A bill to protect bees!

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Late Tuesday afternoon, Representatives John Conyers (D-MI) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) introduced a [long-awaited bill](#) to place a moratorium on bee-harming pesticides. The "Save America's Pollinators Act" would require EPA to pull neonicotinoid pesticides off the market until fully reviewed by independent scientists and proven safe for pollinators.

EPA's current review of these pesticides is due to conclude in 2018, with an action plan to be implemented sometime thereafter. Meanwhile, bees continue to die off in droves — and scientific evidence highlighting neonics as a key factor continues to mount. Bees need help now, and the Conyers-Blumenauer bill provides them an immediate reprieve from neonic exposures.

Introduced in the 1990s, neonicotinoids are a class of systemic, neurotoxic pesticides [known to be](#) particularly toxic to honey bees — and they have rapidly taken over the global insecticide market.

Neonics are widely used on more than 140 crops (including significant use on [corn](#)), as well as on termites, in flea treatments and in lawns and gardens. They are taken up through the plant's vascular system to be expressed in pollen, nectar and [guttation droplets](#) (like dew) — from which bees then forage and drink.

Time for action

As we've reported, bees [continue dying off](#) at alarming rates — with beekeepers reporting losses this past season of 40-70%. And two weeks ago, [50,000 bumblebees](#) dropped dead in a parking lot in Oregon from exposure to a neonicotinoid.

EPA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have largely failed to address concerns about neonicotinoid pesticides, and have collectively indicated that agencies are at least five years away from any steps to protect bees.

Last year, four members of Congress, including Representative Markey (MA), and Senators Gillibrand (NY), Leahy (VT) and Whitehouse (RI) [penned letters](#) to EPA urging the agency to expedite its review of bee-harming pesticides.

The Save America's Pollinators Act ([H.R. 2692](#)) seeks to do precisely that. This bill would suspend the use of neonics until a full review of scientific evidence — plus field studies — demonstrate no harmful impacts to [pollinators](#). Until then, these chemicals would be off the shelf.

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Protecting bees across the pond

Policymakers in Europe pulled three commonly used neonics [off the market](#) earlier this year, citing the growing body science showing their harms to pollinators. Just this week, the EU added [another bee-harming pesticide](#), fipronil, to their restricted list.

While the ban is only in place for two years, it will allow time for scientists to more fully investigate the role neonics are playing in bee declines.

Here in the U.S., it's high time for similarly decisive action. The Save America's Pollinators Act is a strong step in the right direction.

As Paul Towers, PAN's media director, said in a statement this week:

"Congress is now moving to take action to protect bees, where EPA has failed. Following the worst year for bee losses in U.S. history, agency officials have focused attention on a series of endless meetings rather than coordinated action. The Save American Pollinators Act would address these regulatory failures and take bee-harming pesticides off the market."

[Join the call for decisive action to help bees!](#) Urge your Representative to support the Save America's Pollinators Act, and help get this critical bill passed.

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