



January 12, 2015

Honourable Rona Ambrose, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health
Room 163 East Block
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Ambrose:

Municipalities are concerned about the drastic reduction in the population of bees and other pollinating insects due to loss of habitat and pesticide use. We therefore urge Health Canada to direct the Pest Management Regulatory Agency to re-evaluate the impact of neonicotinoids on pollinators.

The attached resolution outlines this challenge in more detail, calling for greater control of the use of neonicotinoid pesticides while still allowing registered applicators to use these products under strictly controlled conditions to mitigate the impact of economically and environmentally damaging invasive insect populations.

We recognize that this is a complex issue that involves the regulatory agency as well as federal and provincial governments. Interjurisdictional cooperation is critical in protecting pollinators that we rely on to support food production and Canada's world renowned biodiversity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Helen Rice', written over a horizontal line.

Helen Rice
AUMA President

cc: Honourable Verlyn Olsen, QC, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
Honourable Kyle Fawcett, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource
Development
Mr. Brad Woodside, President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities

WHEREAS humanity relies upon bees and other pollinating insects to pollinate 2/3 of the world's food crops;

WHEREAS pollinators are a keystone species upon which the health of many others species are dependent;

WHEREAS pollinator habitat is being lost and threatened around the globe due to development and agricultural practice, including pesticide use;

WHEREAS the Province of Alberta would benefit by the identification, protection and enhancement of pollinator habitat;

WHEREAS the economic value of native pollinators is estimated to be over \$3 billion per year in North America;

WHEREAS fruits and seeds derived from insect pollination are a major part of the diet of approximately 25 per cent of all birds, and of mammals ranging from red-backed voles to grizzly bears;

WHEREAS native pollinators can be more efficient and effective pollinators than non-native species;

WHEREAS some of our indigenous plant species rely on specific indigenous pollinator species for successful pollination and thus the continuation of their species;

WHEREAS recently published research indicate a decrease in some of Alberta's indigenous bumblebee populations, including the rusty-patched bumblebee which is now listed as an endangered species in Canada;

WHEREAS European honeybees, which are now used for pollination around the world, are also declining in numbers;

WHEREAS plants play a key role in the prevention of soil erosion and fuel the nutrient cycle by decomposing and absorbing nutrients, and close to 70 per cent of the world's plants rely on pollinators for fertilization and reproduction;

WHEREAS pollinator gardens and parks throughout the province could provide habitat for native pollinators and an opportunity to create awareness in the province about the importance of pollinators and their habitat;

WHEREAS the creation of pollinator parks and gardens that do not require the use of pesticides will therefore create a healthier environment to protect not only pollinators but also human health; and

WHEREAS the use of pesticides is one of the main hazards to pollinator health.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urge the Province of Alberta to change the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and Pesticide Regulations to control the use of neonicotinoid pesticides while still allowing registered applicators to use these products under strictly controlled conditions to mitigate the impact of economically and environmentally damaging invasive insect populations.

BACKGROUND:

Pollinator Protection

Neonicotinoids and related pesticides are prevalent in insecticides and are not a factor in any herbicides. Agricultural producers, home gardeners and commercial users are the primary users of these products and are the most significant contributors to pollinator habitat degradation. Public education and environmental initiatives are required to inform Alberta residents of the importance of providing habitat and reducing insecticide use.

<http://davidsuzuki.org/blogs/science-matters/2009/04/if-the-bees-disappear-well-all-be-stung/>

<http://www.xerces.org>

<http://wildlifepreservation.ca/species-in-need/canadian-species/rusty-patched-bumble-bee/>

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/news/calgary/Declining+populations+pose+threat+food+crops+Alberta+around+globe/8031808/story.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_crop_plants_pollinated_by_bees

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Nectar_Sources_for_Honey_Bees

<http://pollinator.org/index.html>

<http://www.panna.org/publication/generation-in-jeopardy>