



July 22, 2014

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queens Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Wynne,

On behalf of all members of the Ontario Nature Youth Council, we would like to thank you for your plan to restrict the use of neonicotinoids, to invest in bee health research, and to support beekeepers suffering from bee population decline. However, we believe that further action is needed to protect Ontario's pollinators. Given the science that has begun to emerge globally regarding the fatal effects of neonicotinoids, we would specifically like to see a complete ban on neonicotinoid pesticides in this province.

The Ontario Nature Youth Council is made up of 35 teenagers from communities across Ontario. Our mission is to build a diverse provincial network of youth dedicated to inspiring, connecting and educating our communities while protecting wild species and wild spaces. This year, at our annual leadership retreat, we decided to dedicate a new campaign towards raising awareness about wild pollinator decline. The entirely youth-led campaign began with the delivery of over 1,200 postcards signed by concerned citizens across Ontario to you in May. These supporters, like us, wish to see neonicotinoid use banned in Ontario. Additionally, we were able to obtain a social reach of 176,250 people via Thunderclap, which sent an e-blast of our message across numerous media platforms.

There is much more to pollinators than just honey production and flowers. Wild pollinators are an integral part of Canadian ecosystems and serve as the quintessential force behind crop production. Here in Canada, the economic value of all of the crops pollinated by honeybees alone is estimated to be \$1.2 billion a year. Many of our comestibles rely on direct pollination from wild pollinators, as they are responsible for propagating ninety percent of flowering crops. The livelihood of the farming community of Ontario is intrinsically linked to the health of our pollinator population. Unfortunately, Ontario's pollinator populations are rapidly diminishing, a phenomenon largely attributed to the use of neonicotinoid pesticides.

As dedicated and passionate young adults, the recent decline of wild pollinators in Ontario distresses us deeply. From incorporating pollinator focused workshops in the upcoming annual Ontario Nature Youth Summit for Biodiversity and Community Action to designing a poster to educate the public on native pollinator friendly plants, we are working endlessly at raising awareness of this dire situation. With support from a grant received from Mountain Equipment Co-op, we are continuing our work by producing two videos to educate not only farmers and involved members of the public, but youth and homeowners to create more pollinator friendly habitats in their own lives. Our appeal to you is to impose a ban on this pesticide completely.

214 King Street West, Suite 612, Toronto, ON M5H 3S6
T/ 416-444-8419 1-800-440-2366 F/ 416-444-9866
info@ontarionature.org www.ontarionature.org

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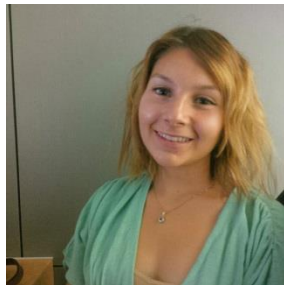


Despite memories of being stung by bees as children, we recognize the importance of pollinators and are fascinated by their awesome and unrelenting diligence for propagating plant species all over the globe. If populations continue to decline, we worry that our children will not be able to hear the melodic humming of bees, butterflies and birds when strolling through wildflower meadows on hot summer evenings. It is a creature comfort that one never tires of.

In order to ensure the prosperity of our Ontarian ecosystems, immediate measures, such as a complete ban on neonicotinoids, must be taken to protect our pollinators. We urge you not only as youth, but as the concerned leaders of tomorrow, to take this measure as soon as possible in order to prevent further damage to Ontario's pollinator species and subsequently, our future.

We thank you for your time and at your earliest convenience, would like to request a meeting to further discuss these matters. Should any questions or concerns arise, feel free to contact Mariel and Joyce on behalf of the Ontario Nature Youth Council.

Yours in conservation,



Mariel Lepra



Joyce Cheng