



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR
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JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

August 4, 2023

Hon. Kathy Hochul
Governor
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Birds and Bees Protection Act

Dear Governor Hochul,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4), at its regularly scheduled Full Board meeting on July 26th, 2023, voted, by a vote of 37 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions and 0 present not eligible, to urge you to pass the Birds and Bees Protection Act (A7640 Glick/S1856 Hoylman-Sigal), a bill to eliminate unnecessary and harmful uses of neurotoxic neonicotinoid pesticides (“neonics”) in New York State.

Background

Neonics are neurotoxic pesticides linked to massive bee and insect losses, vast water contamination, ecosystem harms and human health concerns in New York. A recent Cornell University study revealed that the state’s largest and most harmful neonic uses provide little to no benefits to users or are easily replaceable with safer alternatives.¹³ In particular, the report finds neonic corn and soybean seed treatments—which account for an estimated 73% of the neonics used in New York agriculture—pose “substantial” risks to bees and other pollinators, yet provide “no overall net income benefits” to farmers.¹

The same study revealed neonics are extremely toxic to insects, including bees, and a robust body of scientific evidence links neonic use to massive bee population losses². In New York, beekeepers lost 45% of their bee colonies last year, among the highest loss rates on record. These losses threaten the state’s ecosystems and an estimated \$439 million worth of pollination

¹ <https://cornell.app.box.com/v/2020-neonicotinoid-report>

² <https://www.nature.com/articles/nature.2017.22229>

services to top state crops like apples, squash, tomatoes, blueberries, strawberries, cherries, and pears.

Furthermore, human health studies show that people exposed to neonics in the womb have higher risk of birth defects like malformations of the developing heart and brain.³ A recent study of 171 pregnant women in New York and four other states found that over 95% had neonics in their bodies, especially Hispanic women, with both the frequency and level of neonic detections increasing over the 4-year study (2017-2020).⁴

MCB4 joins the broad coalition of 280+ organizations, businesses, municipalities, farmers from across the state and leading health experts supporting moving the Birds and the Bees Bill into law.

The Birds and Bees Protection Act has passed both the Assembly and Senate with bipartisan support and we expect this administration's commitment to a cleaner, safer, healthier environment continue.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey LeFrancois
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Maarten deKadt
Co-chair
Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee



Leslie Boghosian Murphy
Co-chair
Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee

cc: Hon. Brad Holyman-Sigal, NYS Senate
Hon. Deborah Glick, NYS Assembly

³ <https://www.nrdc.org/bio/jennifer-sass/neonic-pesticides-potential-risks-brain-and-sperm>

⁴ <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.1c08942>