

Open letter: 18 conservation organisations mark pesticides anniversary

1 December 2016

December 1st marks the third anniversary of the introduction of Europe-wide restrictions on three neonicotinoid pesticides - often known as 'neonics' - after they were found by scientists to pose a "high acute risk" to honeybees.

It is clear that there is now more than enough evidence to retain the ban and extend it to all crops, and that this is essential to reverse the decline of bees and other pollinators.

Since 2013 many more independent laboratory and field studies have found neonics impairing the ability of different bee species to feed, navigate and reproduce resulting in declining populations.

There is now solid evidence of harm from neonics to wild bumble and solitary bees which are even more sensitive to these pesticides than honeybees. Evidence has also grown of neonics harming the wider environment with studies indicating a link to butterfly population decline, identifying risks to bird species and finding neonics accumulating to dangerous levels in wildflowers surrounding crops.

2017 will be a crucial year for decisions on bees as scientists will publish the official review of the evidence of harm to bees from the three restricted neonicotinoids.

The government says it will not hesitate to act on evidence of harm. The third anniversary of the neonics restrictions is Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom's chance to catch up with scientific evidence and public opinion by keeping and extending the ban as part of properly protecting Britain's bees and pollinating insects.

Yours faithfully,

Craig Bennett, Chief Executive, Friends of the Earth
Dr Jeremy Biggs, Director, Freshwater Habitats Trust
Pauline Buchanan Black, Director General, The Tree Council
Kath Dalmeny, Chief Executive, Sustain
Martin Harper, Conservation Director, RSPB
Heidi Herrmann, Co-Founder, Natural Beekeeping Trust
Dr Maggie Keegan, Head of Policy, Scottish Wildlife Trust
Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive, Angling Trust & Fish Legal
Peter Melchett, Policy Director, Soil Association
John Sauven, Executive Director, Greenpeace UK
Matt Shardlow, Chief Executive, Buglife
Beccy Speight, Chief Executive, Woodland Trust
Kit Stoner, Chief Executive, Bat Conservation Trust
Steve Trent, Executive Director, Environmental Justice Foundation
Steve Trotter, Director, The Wildlife Trusts
Dr Keith Tyrell, Director, Pesticides Action Network
Dr Martin Warren, Chief Executive, Butterfly Conservation
Catherine Weller, Head of Biodiversity Programme, ClientEarth

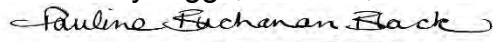
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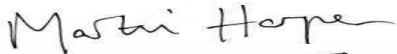
Craig Bennett, Chief Executive, Friends of the Earth



Dr Jeremy Biggs, Director, Freshwater Habitats Trust



Pauline Buchanan Black, Director General, The Tree Council



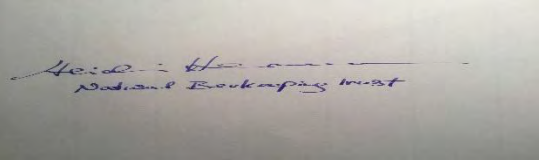
Martin Harper, Conservation Director, RSPB



Kath Dalmeny, Chief Executive, Sustain



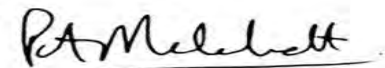
Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive, Angling Trust & Fish Legal



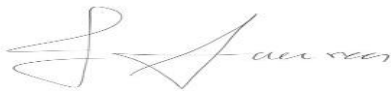
Heidi Herrmann, Co-Founder, Natural Beekeeping Trust



Dr Maggie Keegan, Head of Policy, Scottish Wildlife Trust



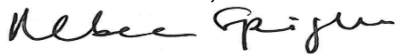
Peter Melchett, Policy Director, Soil Association



John Sauven, Executive Director, Greenpeace UK



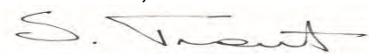
Matt Shardlow, Chief Executive, Buglife



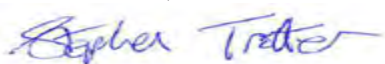
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