



September 9, 2022

To: Governor Tim Walz, Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Strommen
Cc: Sen. Scott Dibble, Sen. Fong Hawj, Rep. Rick Hansen, Sen. Carrie Ruud, Rep. Ami Wazlawik, Sen. Bill Weber.

Dear Governor Walz:

On behalf of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership Pollinator and Wildlife Cluster, we ask for your help. More than a year ago our coalition began working with the Department of Natural Resources in an effort to remove systemic insecticides and insecticide-coated seed from DNR-managed public lands on all Minnesota DNR-managed lands including state forests, state parks, state trails, scientific & natural areas (SNA), aquatic management areas, wildlife management areas (WMA), all rented lands such as crop lands and food plots. Although the DNR indirectly agreed to implement these straightforward changes – there have not been concrete actions taken nor have we been given details of progress over the last year.

Our position is simple, and we're sure you agree: it's a contradiction to use wildlife killing chemicals on public lands intended to protect wildlife and in the public trust. ([Watch video here](#))

WE ARE ASKING GOVERNOR WALZ and COMMISSIONER STROMMEN TO IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AT THE DNR: (The original 2021 proposal to the DNR is attached)

1. Prohibit synthetic systemic insecticides including neonicotinoids on DNR-managed lands
2. Prohibit the use of insecticide-coated seed on DNR-managed lands
3. Develop and use a standardized land lease agreement prohibiting the same. If such pesticides are used, the lease agreement will be terminated.

One example of our concern is the 16,000 acres within Minnesota's Wildlife Management areas (WMA's) that are leased by individuals for crops and likely subjected to the same doses of these pesticides as the adjacent agricultural lands. These crops need to be managed WITHOUT synthetic systemic insecticides that contaminate water and lands, kill pollinators and birds, and harm wildlife.

We are witness to the disappearance of species and a loss of biodiversity crisis in the world and in Minnesota. Our native rusty patched bumble bee is endangered. In July, [the monarch butterfly was designated as endangered by the International Union of Conservation of Nature](#). Insect populations are plummeting and the Minnesota PCA has confirmed wide spread [contamination of state waters from pesticides](#) with lethal consequences for aquatic insects and the fish, amphibians and birds whose survival depends on them. Insects are the base of the food chain and that base is rapidly eroding away.

It's not just insects that are at risk, **new research shows that insecticide treatments and insecticide-treated seed impact the health and viability of deer, pheasants and other Minnesota**

wildlife. Young chicks and fawns struggle to survive, hens lay fewer eggs, adult deer stop foraging, becoming less viable and more susceptible to predation and harsh weather. The effects are widespread and verified through research.

A Canadian study demonstrated that a single neonic coated seed can kill a songbird. Researchers at South Dakota State University are about to release a new study confirming our concerns of insecticide effects on grassland birds and mammals, and a new article on findings from the Minnesota DNR verify the accumulation of neonics across the state in the white-tailed deer population:

- MPR ARTICLE: <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2022/08/23/data-show-increasing-insecticide-levels-in-minnesota-deer>
- TALK BY DR. JONATHAN JENKS on neonicotinoid effects on mammals and grassland bird study: <https://youtu.be/qGdHhogZdW0>
- TALK BY DR. JONATHAN LUNDGREN on agricultural effects of pesticides research: <https://youtu.be/nSmi0xnHZIg>
- LINK TO BIRD META-ANALYSIS: <https://abcbirds.org/article/birds-bees-and-aquatic-life-threatened-by-gross-underestimate-of-toxicity-of-worlds-most-widely-used-pesticide-2/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CA%20single%20corn%20kernel%20coated,can%20fatally%20poison%20a%20bird.>
- LINK TO BIRD STUDY: [neonic coated seed can kill a songbird](#)

The use of systemic insecticides and seed on state public land needs to stop now. This crisis cannot bear further delays. Pollinators, grassland birds, and other wildlife are rapidly disappearing, and state land is their last refuge in a world where wild areas are being developed. Extinction is forever.

WHO WE ARE:

Minnesota Environmental Partnership is a coalition of more than [70 environmental and conservations groups](#). The MEP Pollinator and Wildlife Cluster is comprised of a diverse group of citizens: farmers, scientists, naturalists, educators, health professionals and environmental advocates. This is a priority for our coalition and we will continue to advocate for these changes to the public, to the press and through elected officials.

Thank you for your time and action.

Sincerely,



Steve Morse
Executive Director

Attached:
Original 2021 request to MN DNR

Submitted on behalf of the organizations listed on the following page.

Bee Safe Minneapolis*

CURE (Clean up the River Environment)

Environmental Working Group

Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas

Friends of the Mississippi River

Humming for Bees*

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Izaak Walton League - W.J. McCabe Chapter*

Land Stewardship Project

League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region

Minnehaha Falls Landscaping*

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Minnesota Herpetological Society

Minnesota Ornithologists Union

Pollinate Minnesota

Pollinator Friendly Alliance

Pollinator Stewardship Council*

Renewing the Countryside

Roots Return Heritage Farm*

Sierra Club North Star Chapter

St Croix Oak Savanna Chapter, Wild Ones Native Landscaping

St. Paul Audubon Society

Vote Climate

Wild Rivers Conservancy

**denotes non-MEP member*