Dear \_\_\_,

As a member of \_\_\_WI and your constituent, I am writing to express my concern regarding the news that DEFRA has given emergency authorisation to a pesticide containing neonicotinoid thiamethoxam.

Through the NFWI’s SOS for Honeybees campaign, I have become aware of the environmental harms caused by neonicotinoid-based pesticides. This is especially true of the damage the neonicotinoid-based pesticides on the health and welfare of our pollinators, rivers and waterways, flora and fauna, and aquatic insect and fish populations.

Whilst I understand that the emergency use of neonicotinoid-based pesticides is being applied in a limited capacity due to the risks posed by ‘virus yellow disease’ on sugar beet plants, I am concerned that this will set a precedent for future uses of a highly-damaging pesticide.

This re-introduction of neonicotinoid-based pesticide also comes amidst a further decline in native insect and pollinator populations. This is particularly concerning as the good health and welfare of our pollinators is central to human existence with approximately one third of our human diet is directly dependent on bees.

In the past, DEFRA has publicly acknowledged that the use of neonicotinoid-based pesticides risks ‘extensive and permanent effects on bee populations.’ Further research has also evidenced other forms of environmental damage caused by neonicotinoid-based pesticides, including the pollution of aquatic environments, soil pollution and the endangerment of the lives of aquatic insect and fish populations.

The NFWI were very pleased to welcome the 2018 ban on neonicotinoid-based pesticides, and were also pleased to read the then Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs state that ‘unless the evidence base changes again’, the ban on neonicotinoid-based pesticides would continue following our departure from the European Union.

As an organisation with rural roots, the NFWI appreciates that the effects of climate change are putting increased pressures on farming. However the NFWI believes that the solutions to these problems lie in sustainable farming practices, and not through the use of environmentally damaging neonicotinoid-based pesticides.

I am saddened that the Government has chosen to authorise even the limited use of these neonicotinoid-based pesticides, and would like to receive assurances that no further authorisations will be granted to allow the use of these extremely damaging pesticides.

With best wishes,

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