



Central Maryland Ecumenical Council

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January 28, 2016

RE: Pollinator Protection Act of 2016, SB 198/HB 211
Position: Favorable

Dear Governor Hogan,

We are writing you to express our support of the Pollinator Protection Act of 2016 (SB198, HB211). We appreciate your consideration of our viewpoint.

We have become aware of the threats that neonicotinoids (neonics) pose to the delicate balance of the web of life. Overwhelming evidence connects neonic use to bee hive losses, and in Maryland last year, beekeepers reported a 61% loss in bee hives. This poses a serious threat to our food supply, to wildlife, and to human health. Bees and other pollinators are responsible for 1 out of every 3 bites of food we eat. Clearly this is about much more than just bees, it is about balance, respect for nature, and thoughtful consideration of policies that promote healthy communities.

Many consumers do not realize when they buy flowers and plants for their home gardens, those plants have been treated with neonics. They might be treated with a spray, or even treated systemically such that the seed is coated with the pesticide and infuses into the whole plant including pollen and nectar. While this might produce a hearty plant resistant to insects, at what cost to the web of life and what long-term effects will occur that we're not even aware of yet? And, don't consumers have a right to know when they are purchasing a product that will harm insects and destroy the balance of the natural world? Labeling will help consumers make more educated purchasing choices, and be able to stay true to their convictions at the cash register.

We feel it is our sacred duty to protect and preserve all of Creation as an act of love for our brothers and sisters and future generations. And, equally importantly, we feel consumers have the right to be aware of the risks of their purchases so they can make educated choices.

We must live in harmony with all of Creation around us and promote choices that sustain life, rather than destroy. Allow consumers to make those life-sustaining choices by making it clear what these products contain. We strongly encourage you to support the Pollinator Protection Act of 2016.

Sincerely,

The Reverend Dr. John Deckenback
Chairperson, Ecumenical Leaders Group of Maryland*

The Reverend Dr. John Deckenback (Chairperson)
Conference Minister, Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ

The Reverend Allen V Harris
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The Most Rev. Denis J. Madden
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Interim General Presbyter, Presbytery of Baltimore, (PCUSA)

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Interim General Secretary, Baltimore Yearly Meeting (Quakers)

Reverend Kevin Slayton
President, Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Metro Baltimore

The Right Reverend Eugene Taylor Sutton
Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

The Reverend Fred Weimert
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The Ecumenical Leaders Group is made of the bishops, presidents, executives of Christian denominations. To contact the ELG call or email Gary Gillespie, Executive Director, Central Maryland Ecumenical Council at 443-703-6498 (cell) or email cmecouncil@gmail.com