



March 24, 2022

To: Members of Minnesota House of Representatives Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

Re: Please Support HF 766 to provide better stewardship of pesticide-treated seed

On behalf of the member organizations of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership, I urge the House Agriculture Committee to vote in favor of advancing H.F. 766, a bill to require better stewardship of pesticide coated corn and soybean seed. This legislation would protect Minnesotans and our natural environment from contamination that is becoming more apparent in our water and ecosystems.

Despite the harmful effects of neonicotinoid pesticides on pollinators, wildlife, and people, protections against contamination from these pesticides are limited. Currently, there are not adequate federal or Minnesota state safeguards for the health of people and the environment from contamination from coated seed, nor is pesticide coated seed currently regulated as a pesticide in Minnesota. This loophole allows for casual use and handling of these pesticides that can be devastating to the vital species that make up our state's ecosystem. Neonicotinoids can be harmful or fatal to pollinators, birds, and other animals.

Proper disposal, storage, and re-use of these seeds can help limit pesticide drift and exposure to non-target species. Unfortunately, the existing framework in Minnesota amounts to more of a suggestion, not real protection. Last year's tragedy in Mead, Nebraska is a stark example of the outcome that this bill would help prevent. In Mead, an ethanol plant used seed in its processing that was too pesticide-laden for animal use, resulting in contamination of its neighboring community.

Less clearly visible but no less alarming is the buildup of neonicotinoids in Minnesota wildlife, such as the state's deer herd. Many of our pollinators, on which our broader ecosystem and public health depend, are increasingly endangered.

Some states and countries are taking more far-reaching steps, banning neonicotinoids outright or restricting their use. This comparatively modest step will give our state a tool to put safe practices into law so that disasters and spills like that in Mead don't occur and pesticide drift is reduced. It will create reasonable, actionable protections for our people and our pollinators. Please support H.F. 766.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Morse".

Steve Morse
Executive Director