

TO: Subcommittee on Water Policy 020624

Chair and members: Please find this letter in support of presenter Lucas Rhodes, Sr. Project Attorney for NRDC - Neonicotinoid effects on human health.

Thank you Chair and members for understanding the damaging effects of Neonicotinoids (neonics) and neonic treated seeds in Minnesota. My name is Lori Cox and I own Roots Return Heritage Farm LLC in Carver County. My farm is a sustainable and organic practices farm since 2015. The farm serves as an example of how clean soil and water principles provide the ability to produce food, work within a healthy ecosystem, and provide diversified land and crops access to new & emerging food farmers. Our local foodshed is an answer to pollution problems we see from agriculture today. We need more producers growing more food for a growing population here in the US, but neonics can and do contribute to the inability to do so.

Mr. Rhodes will provide you with facts and studies revealing how neonics are damaging to human health, and reside within us. The sad fact that neonics are used prophylactically vs prescriptively is the larger problem. The only group benefitting from sales are seed/pesticide companies themselves. The rest of us suffer; including the farmer.

When food farmers desire to grow direct to individuals and markets, institutions, schools, hospitals, the threat of neonics in soils and water from neighboring farms endangers the opportunity to grow clean, pesticide-free foods. If certified organic, neonics found on or in plant tissues would cause de-certification, through no fault of the farmer's own, for 3 years. Organic certification provides a higher \$ value item, but the farmer loses their sales channel and revenue. MN is said to be pro-farmer.

Farms like mine depend on pollinators domestic and wild for nutrient-dense foods production. If we are threatened continually by misuse of neonic treated seeds, the damage to local food sheds will decline. During the pandemic, we saw the threat our broken food system revealed when grocery stores went bare in several food categories. Diversity of local foods were and are the security communities need. Economic impacts driven by local foods create a solid case to continue the path to regulating and tracking treated seeds like any other pesticide.

Our MN Department of Agriculture continually finds and reports neonics in our surface waters ([and MDH reports in our groundwater](#)). Remember, these seeds are sold right alongside other agricultural pollutants - nitrogen fertilizers. Sold together, and move into soils and water together. MDA's Sept 2023 PFMD newsletter (pg 4) echoed that fact again. Like nitrogen, MDA is not preventing or removing it even though they have authority and statutory mandates to do so: [PFMD Update | Minnesota Department of Agriculture \(state.mn.us\)](#)

Please consider these facts when bills are presented to you this session, and do right by all Minnesotans for clean air, soils, and waters per the MN Environmental Rights Act established in 1971: [Ch. 116B MN Statutes](#).

Thank you again for your thoughtful considerations.

Lori D Cox, owner/operator
Roots Return Heritage Farm LLC
Carver County, MN