



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

Our Ref: ALMG
26th January 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Neonicotinoid Thiamethoxam

I am writing to you raising concerns over reports that you have allowed the use of products neonicotinoid thiamethoxam to treat sugar beet seed this year in an effort to protect the crop from a virus.

In 2017 there was significant evidence that connected higher levels of neonicotinoid residues and lower bee reproduction, with fewer queens in bumblebee hives and fewer egg cells in solitary bee nests. Evidence suggests the pesticides harm bee brain development, weaken immune systems and can leave bees unable to fly. It was this evidence that led to the European Union agreement to ban all outdoor uses of three neonicotinoid insecticides.

You will know that a third of the UK bee population is thought to have vanished in a decade, and up to three-quarters of crop species are pollinated by bees. When we left the European Union the Government assured Parliament that there would not be any lowering of environmental standards can you assure me that this is still the case?

I would urge you to reconsider the use of these products given the climate crisis that we are all facing. What proof can you give that the UK Government has explored every other option before making this decision? What risk assessments has your department undertaken before these permits were agreed? Finally what action is the Government taking to improve the countries pollinator biodiversity?

Thank you for your attention to this matter, I look forward to your response.

Kind regards

Alyn Smith MP