



# Info Alert

## National Conference of State Legislatures Office of State-Federal Relations

### EPA Releases Two Key Updates on Pollinator Health

Jan. 13, 2017

On Jan. 12., the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) both [finalized](#) an updated policy concerning the risk pesticide products pose on pollinators, and [issued](#) preliminary risk assessments for four neonicotinoid insecticides used in agricultural production.

EPA's updated pollinator health policy, named "[Policy to Mitigate the Acute Risk to Bees from Pesticide Products](#)" is aimed at addressing acute risks to bees from pesticides. The updated policy describes additional pesticide label restrictions to protect bees under contract for crop pollination services, and prohibits applications of highly toxic pesticides under certain conditions when bees are more likely to be present, i.e. bloom. Additionally, the update provides exceptions for those pesticides which have residue that becomes less toxic to pollinators in a short amount of time, and for crops that have longer bloom periods, allowing pesticide use during hours when bees are less active. Within the policy, EPA states its support for the development of state and tribal nation managed pollinator protection plans (MP3s), which aim to increase communication between stakeholders and mitigate acute exposures of pollinators to pesticides.

In addition to finalizing the policy update, EPA [issued](#) preliminary risk assessments for four neonicotinoid insecticides. Of these four, three are pollinator-only assessments—clothianidin, thiamethoxam, and dinotefuran. The assessments showed that "most approved uses do not pose significant risks to bee colonies;" however, applications to a few, select, crops "such as cucumbers, berries and cotton," may pose risks to pollinators that come into contact with its residue.

Both NCSLs Agriculture Task Force and NCSL's Natural Resources and Infrastructure Committee have been active in the issue of pollinator health and recently reauthorized a resolution on [Pollinator Health](#) that states NCSL support for efforts to "assess the effects of systemic pesticides and parasites on bee and other pollinator health and take corresponding action, as appropriate, to protect pollinators from pesticides and parasites."

For any further questions or concerns regarding EPA's recent pollinator protection actions, neonicotinoid risk assessments, or NCSL's Pollinator Health resolution, please contact NCSL staff [Ben Husch](#) (202-624-7779) or [Kristen Hildreth](#) (202-624-3597).