

Poll shows strong support for government action on pesticides

Nearly 8 out of 10 say Ontario government "on right track"

For Immediate Release

December 16, 2014

A poll released today by Friends of the Earth Canada, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, and the Ontario Beekeepers' Association shows nearly 8 out of 10 Ontarians believe the Ontario government is on the right track with its intention to limit use of bee-killing "neonic" pesticides by 80%. Only 12% do not agree with the action.

This polling comes in advance of Ontario government organized consultation sessions on the Pollinator Health Action Plan. The Ontario government has invited environmentalists, beekeepers, health professionals and municipal officials to a consultation session on Tuesday, December 16. A second session with Ontario's farm organizations is scheduled for Thursday, December 18.

Of particular interest, support for the government's plan is strong among both rural and urban respondents, across all regions of the province. The proposed reduction is endorsed by 85% of residents in southwestern Ontario; 81% in Toronto; 79% in the Niagara/Hamilton region; 78% in the GTA; 77% in Eastern Ontario; 63% in Northern Ontario; and 60% in Central Ontario.

"Support for the government's plan is both broad and deep," says Beatrice Olivastri, Chief Executive Officer, Friends of the Earth Canada. "The vast majority of Ontarians—from every corner of the province—think Ontario is on the right track in protecting our bees. Rarely do you see such consensus."

Support for neonic reductions is also strong across supporters of all political parties. In fact, those who would vote PC today are almost as supportive as Liberal voters and slightly more supportive than those who would vote NDP.

The poll also found that almost eight out of ten Ontarians (76%) are concerned about the future of honey bees and wild bees.

"Our food security depends on healthy pollinators," says Gideon Forman, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. "Ontarians are aware of the current crisis and want the government to take action to protect bees."

“We applaud the Wynne government’s resolve to protect our pollinators,” says Tibor Szabo, President of the Ontario Beekeepers’ Association. “Ending the overuse of neonics is the right thing to do and we’re happy Ontarians agree.”

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Friends of the Earth Canada and its US and UK counterparts call for a ban on bee-killing pesticides and practices while delivering practical ways to help bees and wild pollinators.

*With 6,000 members across Canada, **Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment**, works to protect people's health by protecting the planet.*

***Ontario Beekeepers’ Association**, working for beekeepers since 1881.*

The polling was performed by Oraclepoll Research Limited. A total of 1,000 interviews were conducted with Ontario residents 18 years of age and older from December 5th - 9th 2014. The margin of error is ± 3.1%, 19/20 times.