
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

SSB 5972

Brief Description: Concerning the use of neonicotinoid pesticides.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Lias, Van De Wege, Billig, Nobles, Pedersen and Salomon).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Prohibits a person from using neonicotinoid pesticides on outdoor plants beginning January 1, 2026, unless the application is made by a licensed application or during the production of an agricultural commodity.
- Allows the Director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture to authorize the use of neonicotinoid pesticides upon identification of an urgent pest threat.

Hearing Date: 2/20/24

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

Background:

Pesticide Control Act and Pesticide Application Act.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) administers the state Pesticide Control Act and the state Pesticide Application Act. Its activities include adopting rules requiring the registration and restricted use of pesticides, testing and certifying pesticide applicators, issuing handler and worker pesticide training documentation, and providing technical assistance to pesticide applicators and workers.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

All individuals who are licensed, or who are required to be licensed as pesticide applicators, pesticide operators, structural pest inspectors, and pest control consultants, must be certified through examination in the area in which they operate or consult.

Examinations are administered by the WSDA, and the WSDA collects a fee from the applicant for each exam at an amount set in rule. License classifications address the control of a variety of pests, including insects and diseases, pest animals in agricultural situations, aquatic pests, both generally and in irrigation systems, and weeds.

Summary of Bill:

Restrictions on the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides.

Beginning January 1, 2026, a person may not use neonicotinoid pesticides on outdoor plants in this state, unless the application is made by a licensed application or during the production of an agricultural commodity.

Upon identification of an urgent pest threat, the Director of the WSDA (Director) may authorize the sale, possession, or use of neonicotinoid pesticides by written order. The Director must make reasonable efforts to inform the public of the urgent pest threat identified. The written order must include certain information, including:

- identification of the urgent pest threat and the neonicotinoid pesticide to be used in addressing the urgent pest threat;
- a description of all other less harmful pesticides or pest management practices considered that were not deemed to be effective in addressing the urgent pest threat;
- a description of the geographic scope of the written order; and
- the duration the order is in effect, not to exceed one year.

The WSDA must review and update rules related to neonicotinoid pesticides by June 30, 2025, and every four years thereafter.

Definitions.

"Neonicotinoid pesticide" means any pesticide containing a chemical belonging to the neonicotinoid class of chemicals including, but not limited to, : acetamiprid, clothianidin, dinotefuran, imidacloprid, nitenpyram, nithiazine, thiacloprid, thiamethoxam, or any other chemical designated by the WSDA as belonging to the neonicotinoid class of chemicals.

"Agricultural commodity" means any plant, or part of a plant, or animal, or animal product, produced by farmers, ranchers, vineyardists, plant propagators, Christmas tree growers, aquaculturists, floriculturists, orchardists, foresters, or other persons primarily for sale, consumption, propagation, or other use by people or animals.

"Urgent pest threat" means an occurrence of a pest that presents a significant risk of harm or injury to the environment or human health or significant harm, injury, or loss to agricultural crops including, but not limited to, an invasive species.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.