



Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
10 Downing Street
Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

17 March 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

I write to you on behalf of over 100,000 members of the British public who have signed The Wildlife Trusts' petition. Together, we are calling on you to overturn the emergency authorisation of the banned neonicotinoid, thiamethoxam, for use on sugar beet crops. These people agree with us that you should use your powers to remove this dangerous threat to our pollinators, wildflowers and waterways – and instead commit to a more sustainable future for British farming.

We are aware that the recent cold snap means the use of this pesticide has been deemed unnecessary in 2021, as aphid numbers have been lower than anticipated. However, the derogation must be reversed in order to ensure that it will not be used in 2022 or 2023. The weather is to thank for this stay of execution, not a change in Government policy. There is every reason to fear that bees and other wildlife will once again face the threat of neonicotinoids this time next year.

A 'pesticides-first' approach is not science-led policymaking, nor does it follow the precautionary principle. Farmers should not be forced to choose between nature or crop, pollinators or pesticides – and with the right support from Government for continued research into disease-resistant varieties and for Integrated Pest Management (IPM), they can be enabled to move away from highly damaging chemical pesticides. The production of organic beets in Europe shows this is a viable option.

Our petition demonstrates just some of the strength of feeling on this issue. The public wants you to stand up for wildlife and wild spaces, and formally overturn this short-sighted derogation. Nature has a vital role to play in combatting climate change. The Government should instead invest in and prioritise approaches to managing fluctuating temperatures and weather patterns sustainably, for the long term and for all our sakes.

Yours sincerely,

Craig Bennett
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