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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **More Than a Decade is Too Long to Wait for Action on Pesticides Suspected in Bee Deaths Stop stalling, environmental groups tell Minister**

**Ottawa** – Four major environmental organizations have written to Health Minister Rona Ambrose asking her to stop stalling on taking action on pesticides suspected of killing bees, and that lack critical toxicity data.

Clothianidin, one of the neonicotinoid pesticides suspected of killing bees, remains on the market despite the lack of valid scientific studies to support assessment of environmental hazards to bees. Scientific studies investigating the pesticide's chronic toxicity to bees have been requested since 2004 by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) from certain Clothianidin registration-holders, and since 2008-2009 from other companies whose registrations were renewed by PMRA in July 2013 and that sparked a notice of objection in September 2013 by the environmental groups.

The Minister stated in November of 2013 that the PMRA will not receive these required studies until 2015 with a final report from PMRA not available until 2017-18. If PMRA leaves this pesticide on the market and only takes band-aid measures until then, Clothianidin will have been on the market 14 years unsupported by valid scientific information on chronic toxicity. The agency itself calls this a "critical data gap in the risk assessment" of the product. Other missing information long-requested but not received, would tell the PMRA how Clothianidin behaves in soil, and in plants, including its concentration in nectar and pollen, in addition to its long-term, or chronic, toxicity to bees.

"Why is the Minister allowing this situation to drag on for more than a decade?" asked Sidney Ribaux of Équiterre.

Over the years the PMRA has issued under the *Pest Control Products Act* a series of what are called Section 12 Notices requiring the companies holding the registrations for certain uses of Clothianidin to provide these scientific studies. At least one set of deadlines passed and were extended with the agency renewing the registrations allowing Clothianidin to stay on the market while the studies remain outstanding.

"Despite a stack of Section 12 notices for Clothianidin and other similar pesticides (the neonicotinoids) the manufacturers aren't supplying the information. It's the beekeepers who are supplying the evidence, but their dead bees are being ignored," stated John Bennett of Sierra Club Canada Foundation.

According to the PMRA website in 2012:

"Based on the preliminary information evaluated to date, there is an indication that pesticides used on treated corn seeds may have contributed to at least some of the 2012 spring bee losses that occurred in Ontario, however, there is still additional information being collected for consideration and final conclusions have not been made. We are looking closely at the specific circumstances that may have contributed to the unusual number of bee mortalities this spring." [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/alt\\_formats/pdf/pubs/pest/\\_fact-fiche/bees-incident-abeilles-2012-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/alt_formats/pdf/pubs/pest/_fact-fiche/bees-incident-abeilles-2012-eng.pdf)

(The PMRA also reported during 2012 on spring bee losses in several other provinces: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/alt\\_formats/pdf/pubs/pest/decisions/bee\\_corn-mort-abeille\\_mais/bee\\_corn-mort-abeille\\_mais-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/alt_formats/pdf/pubs/pest/decisions/bee_corn-mort-abeille_mais/bee_corn-mort-abeille_mais-eng.pdf))

According to the PMRA web site in 2013:

“Samples of dead bees were collected for pesticide residue analysis along with live bees, comb with pollen and honey stores, vegetation, water, and soil. Preliminary residue results show that approximately 75% of the dead bee samples had detectable residues of neonicotinoid insecticides used to treat corn and soybean seed. Residues of neonicotinoid insecticides were detected in samples from approximately 80% of the beekeepers for which samples have been analyzed. Clothianidin and/or thiamethoxam were detected in > 90% of the comb pollen samples from affected yards and were also detected in some water, soil, and comb honey samples. [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/alt\\_formats/pdf/pubs/pest/fact-fiche/bee\\_mortality-mortalite\\_abeille-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/alt_formats/pdf/pubs/pest/fact-fiche/bee_mortality-mortalite_abeille-eng.pdf)

“In addition to counting dead bees, PMRA might want to count the number of key studies it has demanded, but not received, from the industry over the years”, said Lisa Gue of the David Suzuki Foundation. “PMRA has put the cart before the horse by first issuing approvals allowing Clothianidin on the market and then spending years trying to get information from industry that the agency itself calls ‘critical data’ to the risk assessment for the product,” Gue added.

Sierra Club Canada Foundation, David Suzuki Foundation, Wilderness Committee, and Équiterre represented by the Canadian Environmental Law Association and Ecojustice filed a formal objection to the re-licensing of certain products containing Clothianidin in September 2013 asking for a review panel to be established. There has been no reply from the Minister to this formal application.

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**For more information:**

March, 2014 Letter to Health Minister Rona Ambrose with Section 12 Notices attached:

<http://www.cela.ca/publications/registration-decision-clothianidin>

Notice of Objection (September 2013): <http://www.cela.ca/publications/notice-of-objection-clothianidin-pesticides>

How to pronounce Clothianidin: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzIdSE985Kk>

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