



**Marie Rimmer CBE, MP**  
Member of Parliament for St. Helens  
South & Whiston  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 4847/01744 752075

Dear Constituent,

Bees are essential to the future of our planet, to pollinating our crops and to our rich tapestry of biodiversity. Yet, in the UK, 13 bee species are extinct and now one in ten of Europe's wild bee species are under threat.

Neonicotinoid pesticides were banned across the EU in 2018 due to their harmful impact on bees and pollinators, and the UK Government committed to maintaining these restrictions post-Brexit. However, the Government announced on 8 January that it had authorised an exemption to treat sugar beet in England in 2021.

These pesticides are seriously harmful to Britain's dwindling bee populations and will further damage biodiversity. Bee health is non-negotiable and that is why I am urging the Government to reverse its decision and uphold the ban on neonicotinoids.

I back our farmers and am concerned that sugar beet farmers are experiencing a difficult time with crop blight. However, lifting the ban is not the answer. Better support for the sector, accelerating the introduction of blight-resistant crops and allowances for crop loss to be included in next year's sugar contracts are all required.

I voted for an amendment to the Environment Bill on 26 January that sought to prevent the Government from lifting the ban on neonicotinoids by ensuring greater parliamentary scrutiny of exemptions. Disappointingly, it was voted down by the Government.

In my view, the Government's decision seems like a worrying indication that it could roll back other hard-won environmental gains following the UK leaving the EU. Nor does it show the global leadership required on environmental protection and tackling biodiversity loss ahead of Britain hosting COP26 later this year.

I will continue to press the Government to reverse its decision and find a way forward that is science-led, that protects our bees and safeguards our future biodiversity.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Rimmer CBE, MP  
Member of Parliament for St Helens South and Whiston

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