

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Regarding the Use of Neonicotinoids on Partner Properties

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by and between Thurston County, the City of Olympia, the City of Tumwater, the LOTT Clean Water Alliance, and the Nisqually Land Trust with respect to the use of neonicotinoid insecticides on the properties under their control.

WHEREAS, bees and other insect pollinators are under great environmental stress, experiencing die-offs and diminishing populations, and putting major sectors of agriculture and food security at risk; and

WHEREAS, pollinators, such as honey bees and native bees, are responsible for more than \$15 billion in increased crop value nationally each year. About one third of our diet is directly or indirectly reliant on bee pollination; and

WHEREAS, agriculture is among the largest sectors of the economy of the State of Washington, accounting for over \$49 billion in total revenue and 13 percent of the state's economy; and

WHEREAS, agricultural crops represent an annual value of \$120 million (2012) in Thurston County. This revenue is derived from 1,336 farms totaling 76,638 acres; and

WHEREAS, since 2006 there has been a significant decline in pollinators through the loss of bee colonies in Washington State and the nation. Many experts link the loss to the increased use of a group of pesticide known as neonicotinoids; and

WHEREAS, neonicotinoids are a group of systemic chemicals used to control insects that chew on or suck liquids from plants. The most common of these chemicals are acetamiprid, clothianidin, dinotefuran imidacloprid, thiacloprid and thiamethoxam. These insecticides are sprayed onto a plant or the soil in which a plant is growing to be absorbed and circulated throughout the plant. Some seeds are coated with these chemicals so the plants absorb the chemicals as soon as the plant sprouts. Some nursery plants are drenched with the chemicals. These chemicals make the stems, roots, leaves, flowers, pollen and nectar poisonous for an extended period; and

WHEREAS, the United States Geological Survey has highlighted the growing use of neonicotinoids in the United States and found neonicotinoid contamination in our nation's waters at concentrations known to cause adverse effects in aquatic organisms; and

WHEREAS, United States Fish & Wildlife Service will ban neonicotinoid use in agricultural practices across the National Wildlife Refuge System as of 2016; and

WHEREAS, an independent review of more than 800 scientific studies concluded that neonicotinoids are a key factor in the decline of bees. Significant effects including reduced fecundity, depressed pollinator immune systems, increased susceptibility to biological infections and parasites, and reduced ability to navigate are causing damage to a wide range of beneficial invertebrate species. Secondary effects extend to butterflies, birds and bats; and

WHEREAS, responding to scientific concern over the impact of neonicotinoids on pollinators, the European Union instituted a two-year moratorium on the use of neonicotinoids in 2013, while United States' jurisdictions including Thurston County, WA; the City of Olympia, WA; the City of Seattle, WA; the City of Spokane, WA; the City of Eugene, OR and the City of Sherwood, MN have instituted bans against municipal use; and

WHEREAS, the growth of urban areas and the shift away from plant diversity has, over time, reduced pollinator habitat and forage plants in both acreage and variety; and

WHEREAS, to the degree feasible, the partner organizations will incorporate pollinator habitat and forage species in their landscaping and property management;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the partner organizations agree they will not knowingly purchase or use products or products in packaging containing neonicotinoids on properties under their control. Partners may request suppliers of products to provide testing data from an accredited laboratory or testing facility documenting that the product or product in packaging does not contain neonicotinoids. Partner organizations may accept from businesses, manufacturers, organizations and individuals, results obtained from an accredited laboratory or testing facility documenting the product or product packaging does not contain neonicotinoids.

THURSTON COUNTY

By: Sandra Romero
Sandra Romero, Commissioner, District 2
For the Board of County Commissioners

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

J. Dutte
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Date: _____

CITY OF OLYMPIA

By: _____
Stephen Buxbaum, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Mark Barber
CITY ATTORNEY

Date: 03/25/2015

CITY OF TUMWATER

By: _____
Pete Kmet, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Date: _____

LOTT CLEAN WATER ALLIANCE

By: _____
Steve Langer, Board President

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Date: _____

NISQUALLY LAND TRUST

By: _____
J.W. Foster, President

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Date: _____