**We are aware that several MPs have replied to our supporters with a standard email, defending the Government’s decision with specific information.**

**Below is some wording that responds to this directly, and maybe useful for those that wish to reply to their MP and challenge this stance.**

*Dear MP,*

*Thank you for taking the time to respond to my concerns about the emergency authorisation of the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam on sugar beet seed in 2021. However, I would like to counter some of the reassurances about the use of Cruiser SB that you have given in your email.*

*I am aware that, despite the European ban, many EU states have given emergency authorisation for neonicotinoid use, as you mention– in fact, a recent investigation by Greenpeace found that at least 67 emergency authorisations for outdoor use of neonicotinoids had been issued. However, the efficacy and justification of these emergency authorisations has not been proved. Emergency authorisations are often granted repeatedly and without any apparent evidence of an emergency situation as justification. We do not want this situation to be replicated in the UK, especially when Defra has already recognised emergency use is likely to continue for at least the following year and into 2022.*

*Even emergency use will have a significant impact on our bee and pollinator populations, particularly across the East of England. Insect populations have suffered drastic declines in the UK and are on the brink of collapse. Recent evidence suggests we have lost 50% or more of our insects since 1970, and 41% of the Earth's remaining five million insect species are now 'threatened with extinction'. This has far-reaching consequences for both wildlife and people - with a third of our food crops pollinated by insects there is a lot to lose.*

*I would also contest your statement that the use of thiamethoxam will be strictly controlled. The emergency authorisation allows “seed-dressing” of sugar beet crops, a method of application that results in only 5% of the pesticide reaching the crop. The rest accumulates in the soil, where it can be absorbed by the roots of wildflowers and hedgerow plants visited by bees, or can leach into water sources and affect wildlife that lives there. Additionally, though sugar beet is a non-flowering crop as you say, flowering ‘weeds’ also grow in the fields and will attract bees, who may then be harmed by the neonicotinoids. Defra has proposed to address this through additional herbicide use to control the ’weeds’ - meaning yet more pesticides on our fields.*

*Farmers should not have to choose between nature or crop, pollinators or pesticides. The Government should be focusing funding and efforts on regenerative farming approaches, supporting more farmers to make the transition to Integrated Pest Management and become more resilient to climate change so they can continue to produce nutritional food which is good for people and also has a positive effect on wildlife. Emergency pesticide authorisation risks slowing down crucial research on alternative varieties which are far more resistant to virus yellows. Without these alternatives, climate change will make the need for neonicotinoids even greater in the future.*

*The Government pledged to maintain and increase restriction on neonicotinoids in its 25 Year Environment Plan, but now appears to be moving in the opposite direction.*

*If protecting pollinators is a priority for you, I would again ask you to urge the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister to reverse the emergency authorisation given to neonicotinoid thiamethoxam.*

*Yours sincerely,*