



**WHEREAS:**

Multi-year, double-digit declines in pollinators in the U.S. and Europe have threatened the stability of the global food supply. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, “bee-pollinated commodities account for \$20 billion in annual United States agricultural production and \$217 billion worldwide.”

Neonicotinoids, (‘neonics’) are a class of insecticide linked to declines in pollinators (such as honey bees) and other beneficial organisms and negative impacts to soil and water (according to the U.S. Geological Survey and the International Union for Conservation of Nature). General Mills is a major purchaser of corn, oats, and potatoes – crops that are routinely pre-treated with neonicotinoids.

In General Mills’ 2014 Global Responsibility Report, CEO and Chairman Ken Powell writes that “General Mills announced in 2013 our commitment to sustainably source 100 percent of our 10 priority ingredients by 2020.... Through our sustainable sourcing work, we’re ensuring the long-term viability of our business while advancing sustainable agriculture and strengthening responsible practices throughout the supply chain.” Despite this commitment to sustainability, General Mills does not have a policy regarding the use of neonics. The use of neonics has dramatically increased over the past decade. Neonics are one of the most widely-used insecticides, accounting for roughly 25% of the global agrochemical market. Their prevalence in agriculture, compounded by their ability to persist in soils and become mobile in waterways, further magnifies the risks.

As their use has increased, so have the concerns of scientists, regulators, and the public. In December 2013, the European Union enacted a two-year ban on three neonics. In June 2014, President Obama established a “Pollinator Health Task Force” charged with “understanding, preventing and recovering from pollinator losses.” In July 2014, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service announced plans to restrict neonic use across the Wildlife Refuge System. Moreover, concern about the efficacy of neonics is growing. In October 2014, the Environmental Protection Agency reported that pre-treating soy seeds with neonics provided little or no benefit to production.

In light of these risks, companies are taking action:

- Whole Foods’ Responsibly Grown Rating System will only grant “best” ratings to suppliers that prohibit the use of four neonics.
- Home Depot is working with suppliers to phase out neonics on live goods.
- Lowe’s will phase out neonics as suitable alternatives become available.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

Shareholders request that, within six months of the 2015 annual meeting, the Board publish a report, at reasonable expense and omitting proprietary information, on the Company’s options to prohibit or minimize the use of neonics in its supply chain.

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT:**

Proponents believe the report should include:

- Practices and measures, including technical assistance and incentives, provided to growers to avoid or minimize the use of neonics to pollinators; and
- Quantitative metrics tracking key crops that are grown from seed pre-treated with neonics, and the specialty crops in General Mills’ supply chain that depend on pollinators.