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LWV MINNESOTA RELEASES NEW BRIEFING PAPER ON BEE DECLINE

Committee will be educating local leagues on the effects of neonicotinoid insecticides

St. Paul, MN, December 8, 2015– The League of Women Voters Minnesota has released its latest briefing paper, “The Impact of Neonicotinoids on Honey Bees.”

The paper discusses the important role that bees and other pollinators play in food production, and how the widespread use of neonicotinoids (a class of systemic, neurotoxic insecticides) are harming the health of honey bees and pollinators worldwide. Not only are the chemicals affecting the bees’ survival, they have been found in the majority of streams across the U.S., and in an alarming number of fruits, vegetables, and grains. There are major concerns about the dangers to our planet’s ecosystems and to the safety of our food supplies.

The LWVMN Bee Committee will publish educational materials, including templates of resolutions for local governments, to share with local leagues and community organizations. Patricia Hauser, one of the chairs of the committee, was instrumental in helping the group Humming for Bees pass Minnesota’s first Bee Safe City policy banning the use of all systemic pesticides, including neonicotinoids, on city property.

Despite the proven link of neonicotinoids to bee decline and their pervasiveness in our food and water, they continue to be the most widely used pesticides in the world. Over 94% of U.S. corn and 30% of soybean seeds are treated with the chemicals. Unlike other insecticides, neonicotinoids are systemic and cannot be washed off. It is the hope of the committee to spread the word on the dangers of these products, and work towards banning their use.