



SB300 - Pesticides - Use of Chlorpyrifos - Prohibition

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 12, 2020

Position: Favorable

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee,

Clean Water Action is a grassroots, water-quality advocacy group with 50,000 members in Maryland. While our primary interest is in preserving the quality of the water we drink, we also engage on issues impacting environmental justice and reducing toxic exposure.

Chlorpyrifos is a highly toxic pesticide that should not be used in Maryland. The science on chlorpyrifos is clear, it is so toxic that there is **no safe** use of this pesticide. Even when applicators followed labels and wore protective equipment, their exposure level was unsafe. It is highly toxic to both people and pollinators, and is a significant toxic threat to our remaining bees.

In 2015, the EPA made a very unusual move to propose a ban on chlorpyrifos. This was based on the body of peer-reviewed science that correlated chlorpyrifos exposure with brain damage in children, even at low exposures. In 2016, the EPA reaffirmed this decision. When this decision was reversed in 2017, it was based on no changes to the scientific understanding. States, including Maryland, have sued the EPA over this reversal and this lawsuit continues to move through the court system.

While orchardists and golf course managers may like to keep chlorpyrifos in their toolbox, there is **no safe exposure level for chlorpyrifos**. Even with careful use of chlorpyrifos, applicators cannot apply it safely. There are other pesticides available that can be used appropriately and safely, and those should be used instead.

While some may want to continue to use chlorpyrifos because of its effectiveness at killing pests, unfortunately it is too effective at not only killing pests, but also killing and damaging beneficial insects such as bees and other pollinators, aquatic life, and people, especially the very young.

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Maryland can and should ban all uses of chlorpyrifos. Whether applied to trees, vegetables, or turf grass, chlorpyrifos is toxic to people, pollinators, and aquatic life.

- Chlorpyrifos is highly toxic even at low exposures. The EPA determined that there is no safe exposure of chlorpyrifos.¹
- Chlorpyrifos does not remain confined on farms and golf courses.
 - In the 2006 toxic assessment for the Chesapeake Bay, there was chlorpyrifos present in 90% of the water samples that were tested for it.²
 - It can drift 300 feet after application.³
 - Chlorpyrifos remains on food, and children are exposed to unsafe levels through fruits and vegetables.⁴
- There are effective alternatives to chlorpyrifos that are safer to use.

Other states have taken action to ban chlorpyrifos. Opponents to this legislation may point out that New York and California opted for regulatory bans, but at the end of the day both states have banned the use of chlorpyrifos. California has continued to allow granular use, which is a small part of chlorpyrifos use, and New York has allowed the continued use of chlorpyrifos, but only on apple tree trunks and only until the end of 2021.

We urge a favorable report on SB 300 to protect Marylanders, our waterways, and our bees from this dangerous pesticide that the EPA determined after extensive review **cannot be used safely**.

Thank you,

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¹ US EPA, 2016. Chlorpyrifos: Revised Human Health Risk Assessment. EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0653-054.

² Chesapeake Bay Program, 2006. Prioritized Chesapeake Bay Organic Toxics of Concern Method and Assessment. https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/Prioritized_Cheseapeake_Bay_Organic_Toxics_of_Concern_Method_and_Assessment_2006.pdf

³ US EPA, 2016. Chlorpyrifos: Revised Human Health Risk Assessment. EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0653-054.

⁴ US EPA, 2016. Chlorpyrifos: Revised Human Health Risk Assessment. EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0653-054.