

Testimony in Support to Senate Bill 300 Pesticides - Use of Chlorpyrifos – Prohibition

**Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 300, which prohibits anyone in the state from using the pesticide Chlorpyrifos. This bill would help to keep children, teachers, and communities safe from the pesticide's detrimental effects.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for the careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Chlorpyrifos and other pesticides like it have extremely harmful effects on adults and even more so on children during their developmental years. According to a 2012 report by the Pesticide Action Network, the United States has seen a "rampant rise of learning disabilities, childhood cancer and asthma" linked to pesticide exposure. Maryland has made great strides in reducing school children's exposure to pesticides over the years. In 1998, Maryland was the first state in the country to pass a law which limits the use of pesticides in and around public schools. This bill only allows pesticide use if all other options have been exhausted. The law also requires schools to notify the school community if these chemicals are applied. While that legislation has been a great step in the right direction, there is still concern around its enforcement. We must make sure schools are adhering to the notification system as children with severe asthma could be seriously affected.

Chlorpyrifos is such a concern for school children that last year US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand introduced the Safe School Meals for Kids Act. This federal legislation would restrict schools from serving any food with a detectable amount of chlorpyrifos. Chlorpyrifos is typically applied to foods that school children eat such as corn, strawberries, apples, and wheat. Banning its use in agricultural settings in Maryland would alleviate concerns about consumption in schools and make Maryland agriculture more attractive for school systems to purchase.

Students and teachers are also impacted by pesticide application in the surrounding area. Chlorpyrifos is not only used in typical food production, but also at golf courses and vineyards. Schools near golf courses, vineyards, or farms are negatively impacted by pesticide spray drift. According to the Maryland Pesticide Education Network, "Pesticide spray drift is typically the result of small spray droplets being carried off-site by air movement." Pesticide spray drift has been linked to pesticide poisoning in surrounding areas. Passing Senate Bill 300 would alleviate this concern for schools in agricultural regions.

This bill makes great strides in keeping all of Maryland's school children and educators safe. **MSEA respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 300.**