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MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

LEGISLATIVE COMMENT

DATE: February 12, 2020

BILL NUMBER: HOUSE BILL 229

SHORT TITLE: PESTICIDES - USE OF CHLORPYRIFOS - PROHIBITION

MDA POSITION: INFORMATION

EXPLANATION:

This legislation would ban the use of insecticides that contain Chlorpyrifos or seeds that have been treated with Chlorpyrifos in the State of Maryland, and to require the Department to provide education and assistance relating to integrated pest management, which includes information on safer alternatives to chlorpyrifos.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is strongly committed to ensuring a healthy environment for all Marylanders, and making sure that all pesticide products, including Chlorpyrifos are registered with the state and are being used in a lawful manner.

MDA's State Chemist Section enforces the federal registration of pesticide products at the state level. To date, MDA has 43 products with 19 registrants in the state that use Chlorpyrifos. These products are used in a wide range of industries with primary uses in agriculture for row crops, including non-GMO corn. However, other industries including manufacturing, landfills, storage areas, railroads, and construction may all use Chlorpyrifos on a case by case basis. It is considered a very valuable tool in the tool box to combat pests such as fire ants, root worms, and termites.

The Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has always taken the lead on pesticide registration and labeling issues. The EPA can and have canceled or changed pesticide product registrations and product labeling to protect the environment, human health, wildlife, and pollinators. EPA has vast resources, expertise and reach to evaluate the vast volume of data and information available worldwide to assess pesticide use and sales.

This bill does not include any additional funding to carry out the provisions. Special fund expenditures would be directed away from existing enforcement and educational activities, and federal funding could be compromised.

On Thursday, February 6, 2020 Corteva announced it would stop manufacturing chlorpyrifos. In a statement, the company said, “Demand for one of our long-standing products, chlorpyrifos, has declined significantly over the last two decades, particularly in the U.S. Due to this reduced demand, Corteva has made the strategic business decision to phase out our production of chlorpyrifos in 2020.”

If you have additional questions, please contact Cassie Shirk, Director of Legislation and Governmental Affairs, at cassie.shirk@maryland.gov or 410-841-5886.