



SENATE BILL 0345 - Pesticides - PFAS Chemicals - Prohibitions

POSITION: FAVORABLE

February 14, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman and Honorable Members of this Committee,

I am writing in **SUPPORT** of **Senate Bill 0345**, which requires the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop and maintain a list of registered pesticides containing PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) chemicals as active ingredients and prohibits their use starting in 2026. **This bill is crucial to safeguard the health of Maryland's environment, especially our Coastal Bays, and protect public health from the devastating impact of PFAS.**

Assateague Coastal Trust serves more than 800 square miles of Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore, including Worcester and portions of Wicomico and Somerset Counties, in its mission to safeguard clean water rights for residents and visitors to the region. We speak on behalf of our membership, residents and visitors alike, who share a common interest in the health of the Coastal Bays located behind Assateague Island, and the southern tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay.

PFAS chemicals, often referred to as "forever chemicals," are synthetic substances that are extremely persistent in both the environment and human bodies. **Their resistance to degradation means that once they enter ecosystems, they can persist for decades, contaminating soil, water, and wildlife.** In agricultural and landscaping settings, pesticides containing PFAS can leach into local ecosystems, resulting in widespread contamination. This poses serious threats to Maryland's Coastal Bays and other fragile ecosystems.

Maryland's Coastal Bays are some of the most beautiful and ecologically important areas in the state. These shallow, tidal estuaries provide critical habitat for wildlife, support diverse fish and bird populations, and play a vital role in the state's economy through tourism and fishing. Unfortunately, PFAS contamination in these areas threatens the integrity of these ecosystems. PFAS can accumulate in fish, shellfish, and wildlife, leading to long-term health risks for both the creatures that inhabit the bays and the people who depend on them. Contaminated seafood poses significant risks to public health, particularly vulnerable groups such as children and pregnant women, who may suffer from developmental and immune system issues as a result of PFAS exposure.

In addition to environmental harm, PFAS chemicals are linked to a range of adverse health effects, including cancer, liver damage, immune system suppression, and hormonal disruption. These health threats highlight the importance of removing PFAS chemicals from agricultural practices, where they have the potential to spread quickly into our ecosystems and food supply.

Senate Bill 0345 is a critical step toward reducing PFAS contamination in Maryland's Bays, rivers, and other natural resources. By requiring the Department of Agriculture to list and eventually phase out the use of PFAS-containing pesticides, this bill will help limit the further spread of these harmful chemicals. This proactive approach will not only protect public health but also preserve the economic and ecological vitality of Maryland's coastal and agricultural communities.

I urge the Senate to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on **Senate Bill 0345**, ensuring that Maryland continues to lead the way in environmental protection and public health. The health of our Coastal Bays, the Chesapeake Bay, and the well-being of Maryland's residents depend on it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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