



February 18, 2025

Committee: Senate Education, Energy & Environment

Testimony on: SB345: Pesticides - PFAS Chemicals - Prohibitions

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Feldman and members of the Committee,

Maryland Pesticide Education Network worked in partnership with KW Landscaping on the State House Grounds Pesticide-free Land Care Project. We submit KW Landscaping's testimony and will provide oral.

KW Landscaping's testimony: I am the founder and owner of KW Landscaping Inc. since 1993. For over a decade, I have been trusted by the Maryland State House Trust and the Maryland Dept. of General Services to care for its grounds without the use of chemical pesticides. It is with our experience and commitment to sustainable land care that we provide this testimony in strong support of SB345 that proposes to phase out on PFAS pesticides.

Since our company's pledge to organic land care in 2009, we have demonstrated that effective strategies and natural products for pest control, weed control, and fertilization are available and effective. We have been successfully using these alternatives for lawn care, **eliminating the need for chemical pesticides, especially dangerous PFAS pesticides.** Instead of poisoning, we focus on soil health, biodiversity, and sustainability.

PFAS chemicals are notorious for their persistence in the environment and are commonly known as "forever chemicals" because they do not break down. Yet even with conventional lawncare that relies on pesticide applications, there are alternative Maryland registered products available to replace PFAS-pesticides in Maryland's 14,000 pesticides inventory currently registered for sales and use in our state. While there are 22 PFAS pesticides registered in Maryland labelled for use on lawns, we use none of them to keep the State House and our clients' lawns healthy, beautiful, and weed-free. When it comes to our expertise in lawn and general plant care, we know that there is NO NEED for using PFAS pesticides, which harm the environment and public health in ways that persist for generations.

The State House Organic Land Care Project was originally launched as a pilot project at the request of the then-Maryland Governor's Bay Cabinet with the Maryland Pesticide Education Network, who coordinated **the pilot effort with the goal to assess the viability of pesticide-free land care for state land. By 2014, the success of the pilot was established, and the grounds have continued to be beautifully and successfully maintained as pesticide-free since then, despite constant heavy foot traffic.**

Our State House is one of only two state houses in the United States to feature a completely chemical-free landscape. Just ask any visitor to the Maryland State House for their impression of the beautiful State House grounds, as evidence that you can achieve lush and healthy landscapes without the use of chemicals, including PFAS Pesticides.

At Team KW Landscaping, our vision statement is "We believe in taking care of others so that they may live a fulfilled life." To us, "others" includes our Mother Earth and all the life that inhabits her.

We are proud to support SB345. It aligns with our core belief: that we must take care of the earth, the creatures that share it, and the health of our communities. We strongly urge you to support SB345 and protect Maryland's environment and communities from the harmful impacts of PFAS pesticides. Thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,
Kevin Wengernuk
President of KW Landscaping, Inc.
64 Gambrills Road
Severn, MD 21144

Ruth Berlin
Executive Director, Maryland Pesticide Education Network
Baltimore office: 2913 Overland Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21214