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Testimony in SUPPORT of Seante Bill 345 – Pesticides – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibitions

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 18, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF SB345** on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Deeply rooted in the South, West, and Rhode Rivers, Arundel Rivers Federation heals and protects our waterways and champions clean water across Maryland. Our vision is healthy waterways for all, and we achieve our mission through restoration, education and outreach, and Riverkeeper programs.

SB345 is a reasonable and important step towards protecting the health and welfare of Marylanders and our environment by mandating certain PFAs pesticides sold in Maryland be phased out over several years. PFAs are pervasive, forever, and toxic to humans and the environment and PFA-containing pesticides contribute to the proliferation of PFA contamination in our local environment. SB345 will impact less than 8% of pesticides sold in Maryland and allows phase-out time to minimize hardship on agricultural parties.

PFAs applied to fields may runoff into our local waterways, spreading forever chemical contamination to soil and surface waters. Arundel Rivers and fellow Waterkeepers within the Chesapeake recently sampled for PFA chemicals in 12 locations in Maryland waterways, including the South River in Annapolis. PFAs were present in every sample, some at alarmingly high rates. Piscataway Creek, a tributary of the Potomac River, found PFAs more than 68,000 times higher than the EPA's interim health advisory in drinking water.

We can no longer deny the negative impacts PFAs pose to human and environmental health. Even at very low levels, PFA exposure has been linked to kidney, testicular, prostate, and breast cancer, birth defects, thyroid disease, and more. PFA exposure through pesticides presents a broad risk to Marylanders because they are so widely used. It is conservatively estimated that more than 20 million pounds of pesticides are applied annually in Maryland. By prohibiting the sale of dangerous and pervasive "forever pesticide" products containing PFAs as an active ingredient, we will have a healthier Maryland – taking an important step towards protecting our food, water, soil, waterways, and communities.

Arundel Rivers Federation strongly supports our state taking any step that will assist in reaching our vision of healthy waterways for all and we respectfully request a **FAVORABLE REPORT on SB345**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper
Arundel Rivers Federation