



Testimony in Support
SB 300 – Pesticides – Use of Chlorpyrifos - Prohibition

Good afternoon Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee.

My name is Tom Hucker, and I'm a Senior Advocate with NRDC, the Natural Resources Defense Council, one of the nation's largest environmental organizations, with over 3 million members and supporters.

Thank you to Senator Lam and to all the cosponsors for your leadership on this critical issue, and to all of you who voted this bill onto the Senate floor last year.

NRDC is again asking all of you to do the right thing by banning the agricultural use of chlorpyrifos. It's crazy that we have to ask you to do this, since the EPA - following its extremely thorough, deliberative process - banned chlorpyrifos for household use twenty years ago - back in 2000. But they undercut the benefits of that action when they continued to allow currently five million pounds of it to be applied annually to a variety of crops, including apples, oranges, broccoli, berries, and tree nuts. And that agricultural use has meant continued contamination of air and water supplies as well.

Of course, that makes no sense. If the EPA decided this chemical is so dangerous that they prevented you from spraying it at home - even in your garage or your yard - why would we allow anyone to spray it on our food, or near our water supplies?

NRDC and Pesticide Action Network originally petitioned EPA to ban chlorpyrifos in 2007, thirteen years ago. EPA responded by proposing a ban on chlorpyrifos in 2015 based on finding extensive risk from contaminated drinking water. An update in 2016 affirmed those findings and additionally found that current uses in agriculture are not safe for children - leaving harmful residues behind on common fruits and vegetables that led to exposures in children up to 14,000 percent (equal to 140 times) of EPA's safety limit.

But in March 2017, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt reversed course and put the brakes on EPA's proposed ban. And that's what brings us here today. It's time for the Maryland General Assembly to protect children's health by taking the action the EPA intended before they were taken over by Pruitt and former chemical executive Nancy Beck.

You have a slam dunk scientific case to ban chlorpyrifos. In addition to the terrific scientific experts urging you to pass this bill, I want to add the [formal comments to the EPA](#) submitted by

my NRDC colleague, Dr. Jennifer Sass. Her comments, signed by over 45 top scientific experts, urge the EPA to prohibit the use of chlorpyrifos on food crops.

Those 45 leading, independent health scientists and healthcare professionals support the EPA's 2016 Revised Human Health Risk Assessment, and EPA's 2015 proposal to revoke all food uses of chlorpyrifos. That evaluation by EPA found that chlorpyrifos is unsafe to use in any amount, because use leads to toxic residues on fruits and vegetables, drinking water contamination, and harmful drift from fields in agricultural communities.

So in any ordinary administration, under presidents of both parties, the EPA would have already banned this. The only reason we need this bill is due to Scott Pruitt rejecting the overwhelming scientific evidence and hijacking the EPA's professional process.

But you don't have to go along with that. If the Trump EPA decided that we should reauthorize sales of DDT, you would not comply. You would step up and ban DDT in Maryland. And if you would ban DDT, why would you continue to allow chlorpyrifos - when the EPA's process and the overwhelming weight of independent science would urge you to prohibit it? It's time for Maryland to follow the science, and ban chlorpyrifos.

Since we were here last year, the case for Maryland to take action has grown even stronger. In July, EPA announced that it would refuse to ban chlorpyrifos, so other jurisdictions have stepped up. Last fall, California's EPA reached a settlement with Dow and other pesticide producers to ban all uses of chlorpyrifos in California by the end of this year. In December, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo issued an administrative order to ban all uses of chlorpyrifos in New York state. And that same month, the 27 nations in the European Union overcame tremendous industry lobbying and voted to ban all uses of chlorpyrifos.

If New York and California and 27 European nations can all stand up to the pesticide industry lobbyists to protect their children's brains, I know Maryland can as well. This committee has stood up for public health and the environment over and over, such as when you banned fracking and when you ended consumer use of neonics. Here you have an open-and-shut case, with the science every bit as overwhelmingly clear and the threat to our children as profound - I know you'll do the right thing and ban the remaining uses of chlorpyrifos. Thank you!