

Mid-Atlantic Invasive Plant Council Testimony against Maryland HB 472 February 3, 2021

Good afternoon Madam/Sir Chair and members of the subcommittee. My name is Marc Imlay. I am testifying, as a board member, on behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Invasive Plant Council. The council, composed of representatives of Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia, strongly opposes HB472.

Glyphosate is a safe, widely used, short-lived systemic herbicide and the most effective and affordable chemical for treatment of invasive and noxious plants that threaten native ecosystems. Without glyphosate, land managers will be forced to use more toxic herbicides to manage plant pests. There is no valid, science-based argument to support the proposed broadscale ban on its use.

Over 630 introduced invasive plant species are known to be impacting and threatening our region's natural areas and ecosystems. These areas include local, state and national parks, state and national forests, wildlife refuges, preserves, rivers, lakes, wetlands, private properties, and the Chesapeake Bay estuary. Habitat degradation by invasive species is one of the primary drivers of native species losses. Natural areas dominated by native plant species provide critical habitat for native wildlife including insects, birds, frogs, turtles, fish and many other animals. Additionally, healthy native ecosystems help to offset the impacts of global climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide and cooling the local environment.

Glyphosate is the most reliable, effective, affordable and lowest-risk herbicide used to manage natural areas in Maryland (and world-wide) against the broadest range of pest plants. Published scientific research shows that glyphosate has insignificant effects on human health and negligible impacts to wildlife, fungi and soil microbes when used according to label instructions for invasive plant management. Glyphosate has a unique mode of action and is broken down rapidly by microorganisms, giving it very short-term persistence in the soil.

A recently-published 12-year study of national parks in the eastern U.S., led by Kathryn Miller, concluded that invasive plants are getting worse and invasive plant management will require a greater investment of resources. If glyphosate is removed from the tool box, land managers in Maryland will be forced to rely on more toxic, more persistent, more expensive, and less broadly effective herbicides. Invasive plant control will also see a much higher labor cost due to the increased need for manual and mechanical management.

Glyphosate is an important and necessary tool for a successful integrated pest management strategy in natural areas, together with manual, mechanical and biological management. The Mid-Atlantic Invasive Plant Council promotes targeted employment of glyphosate, according to the pesticide label directions, for preserving our environment.

Thank you.