



To: Members of the House Committee on Environment and Transportation

House Office Building
6 Bladen Street Room 251
Annapolis, MD

From: Riley Titus, CropLife America

Date: 2/3/2021

RE: HB 472, Agriculture – Glyphosate - Prohibition

Chair Barve, and distinguished members of the Committee on Environment and Transportation:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony about HB 472, which would prohibit the use of glyphosate in Maryland. We respectfully oppose this legislation and request an unfavorable vote.

Glyphosate is one of the most widely studied herbicides developed, with more than 40 years on the market and 800 safety studies submitted to regulators in over 160 countries. No regulatory agency in the world has concluded that glyphosate is a carcinogen. In January 2020, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reaffirmed its findings that “there are no risks of concern to human health when glyphosate is used in accordance with its current label. EPA also found that glyphosate is unlikely to be a human carcinogen.”¹

We support and promote science-based policy and regulatory processes necessary in the regulation of pesticide products at both the state and federal level. In addition to the extensive review and approval process EPA applies to pesticides, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) also reviews pesticides before they are registered or used in the state. This dual layer of oversight and enforcement helps ensure safe and proper pesticide use across Maryland through state registration of pesticides, certification of pesticide applicators, and enforcement and research activities. MDA registration and regulation of pesticides also promotes consistency with federal regulation and scientific standards, particularly those for human health and safety and the environment.

This bill would undermine the expertise and authority of MDA. Prohibiting the use of glyphosate-based herbicides would create unintended consequences, costing the state significantly in alternative solutions, adversely affecting vegetation management, impacting natural resources and investments, restricting agricultural producers and agricultural state college programs, and ultimately harming the state’s economy and budget. A neighbor state,

¹ “Glyphosate” Ingredients used in pesticide products, United States Environmental Protection Agency, <https://www.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/glyphosate#main-content>

Connecticut, when faced with a proposal to prohibit uses on roads and highways found that loss of this tool for those uses would cost the state more than \$2 million dollars.²

Glyphosate-based herbicides are used to control and manage invasive and unwanted vegetation. It is an important tool for agriculture, in addition to other uses like forestry and natural resources management, road and highway maintenance, rights of ways and energy corridors, aquatic vegetation control, and parks and recreation. Maryland farm operations total 2 million acres in the state³. Maryland's Department of Natural Resources manages more than 475,000 acres of public lands and protected open spaces in the State⁴. Losing this tool would make vegetation management, invasives control, and weed resistance nearly impossible for farmers and state land managers, generating significant costs, revenue and crop yield losses.

Losing this tool would also have negative impacts on practices to help address climate change currently practiced by farmers. The use of herbicides enables regenerative farming practices that protect the environment, such as no-till farming in which fields are not plowed and residue from the previous seasons' crops are left in the field as mulch for the next growing season. The benefits of no-till farming include reduced soil erosion (by about 90%), water conservation, improved soil health, and reduced fuel use because farmers don't plow their fields between crops.⁵ According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, no-till farming saves a combined 812.4 million gallons of fuel each year – roughly the annual amount of energy required by 3.2 million homes – and reduces CO2 emissions by 9.1 million tons – the equivalent annual emissions of 1.9 million passenger cars.⁶

Glyphosate is an important tool for agriculture and the State. Because of this and the reasons stated above, CLA urges your NO vote on this legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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CropLife America (CLA) represents the manufacturers, formulators and distributors of crop protection products in the United States. CLA member companies produce, sell and distribute virtually all the crop protection products used by American farmers.

² “SB-754” Office of Fiscal Analysis, Connecticut, <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2017/fna/2017SB-00754-R00LCO06752-FNA.htm>

³ United States Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Statistics Service, Maryland 2019 State Agriculture Overview, https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=MARYLAND

⁴ Maryland Department of Natural Resources, About Our Lands, <https://dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/lands.aspx>

⁵ “Seeing is Believing: Soil Health Practices and No-Till Farming Transform Landscapes and Produce Nutritious Food” United States Department of Agriculture, <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2016/12/19/seeing-believing-soil-health-practices-and-no-till-farming-transform>

⁶ “Reduction in Annual Fuel Use from Conservation Tillage” Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture, https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcseprd1258255.pdf