



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

February 24, 2021

Environment and Transportation Committee

HB1025

Pesticides – Carbofuran – Collection, Disposal, and Prohibition on Possession or Storage

FAVORABLE

The Humane Society of the United States, on behalf of our members and supporters in Maryland, urge a favorable report on HB1025, which would ensure that continued illegal use of this highly toxic and banned pesticide is addressed and that existing stockpiles seized and appropriately disposed of.

Carbofuran in its liquid form was banned by the EPA in 2009 for unacceptable levels of toxicity, which posed a threat to humans, wildlife, and the environment. Carbofuran was linked to widespread bird deaths, prompting the Environmental Protection Agency to ban the pesticide in granular form in the early 1990s. Yet this toxin has continued to poison and kill wildlife in Maryland years after it became illegal to use. As the Baltimore Sun reported, Carbofuran is believed to have killed at least 19 bald eagles in Maryland since 2016, as well as at least one fox and horned owl.¹ This poison also poses a threat to humans, dogs, and other pets, who can be exposed walking through areas where the chemical has been discharged or applied.

Maryland is unique in seeing the continued death of wildlife to this potent toxin. While the use of Carbofuran has been illegal since 2009, in Maryland it is legal to possess a banned pesticide as long as it is not used, sold, or traded. However, long-term storage of these pesticides creates risks of seepage, accidental contamination, accidental use, as well as the potential for intentional use. State law does not authorize law enforcement to remove this banned chemical even when it is found on the properties where incidences of human, pet exposure and wildlife deaths including high numbers of eagle have occurred, and people who possess this toxin might not know what it is due to inappropriate storage conditions, lack of maintenance of labels and chain of custody, and or importantly how to safely and securely dispose of it.

By creating a coordinated program for seizing Carbofuran, eradicating existing stockpiles and disposing of them in a safe and responsible manner, Maryland can make an important step towards ensuring that the 2009 ban is truly and fully enforced. HB 1025 is a common-sense measure to ensure that illegal substances do not continue to kill wildlife and poison Marylanders. We urge a favorable report.

¹ <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/environment/bs-md-bald-eagle-death-data-20190502-story.html>