

Maryland Senate
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Pesticide Regulations – Transfer to Department of the Environment (SB 268)
February 2, 2022 – **SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the Montgomery County Council of PTA (MCCPTA) for the 2022 legislative session. MCCPTA represents over 25,000 members from over 200 school communities. MCCPTA supports SB 268, Pesticide Regulations – Transfer to Department of the Environment. This bill would place the oversight of pesticides used in our homes, schools, and communities in the State agency whose scope includes oversight of toxins in Maryland and protection of Maryland’s natural resources. National PTA’s position on Environmental Health & Safety addresses support for SB 268 as it advocates for laws that:

- **Eliminate environmental pollutants and prevent new hazards.**
- **Protect children** from health risks by testing for specific hazards in and around homes and schools and, if hazards are found, **by limiting exposure and addressing remedies.**
- Support research and **data collection about environmental hazards and health risks.**

MCCPTA believes that transferring the regulation of pesticides from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Environment (MDE) would provide expanded comprehensive protection to our children and our natural resources (i.e. air, water, soil) from exposure to known toxins, specifically to US Environmental Protection Agency registered hazardous pesticides, over 1,4000 of which MDA registered for use in Maryland in 2021.

MCCPTA strongly believes MDE enforcement and adherence to the 1997 Maryland School Integrated Pest Management Law would ensure that our children receive the full protection intended by this groundbreaking legislation. We appreciate the enormous challenges posed by this public health crisis and believe that pesticide regulations under MDE would create create safer physical environments for our children, teachers, and staff when EPA registered pesticides are used in schools, especially those currently being used to control pathogens associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Transparency, verification, and compliance with the Maryland School IPM Law, intended to specifically protect children and their school environment is necessary to ensure the measures taken meet current science-based guidance on safer air quality, water quality during pest management in schools.

As pesticide use exists where children live, work (attend school) and play (our communities), an agency whose priority is agriculture and supporting farmers in Maryland does not align with protection children and their environmental health. We believe an agency whose focus is protecting public health and our environment from known toxins would be better able to protect children from pesticides allowed for use in the State of Maryland.

SB 268 is about meeting the health and environmental protection needs of all Maryland children. The State agency whose primary focus is protection should be the agency that oversees the most hazardous of toxins, pesticides, which are designed to kill living things and are a known hazard to children’s health.

We support all efforts to protect the most vulnerable, infants and children, from known hazards. The chemicals in pesticides have the potential for causing harm to growing children. **It is prudent and responsible to monitor these chemicals as they enter the environment**, and therefore have the potential for coming in contact with children. **Maryland has a responsibility to track these chemicals and monitor their impact to public health and specifically to growing children. The MDE is the agency best equipped to perform that vital responsibility. Our children deserve their protection.**

MCCPTA recommends a favorable report on SB 268

Respectfully,

Laura Stewart
MCCPTA Capital Improvements Chair
MCCPTA Health and Wellness Committee Member