



Mission: *To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy* **Vision:** *Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities*

HB 570: Pesticides – Mosquito Control Products and PFAS Chemicals
Hearing Date: 03/02/2022
Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Position: Support

Chairperson Pendergrass and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are a critical threat to the health of everyone. As we have learned more about the impacts of this family of chemicals, its acute and chronic health impacts and persistence in the environment, it has become a primary concern to eliminate and mitigate this chemical. The Maryland Public Health Association would like to express its support for House Bill 570, sponsored by Delegate Stein. This bill will require testing of widely used mosquito control products in Maryland for PFAS contamination. Additionally, the bill would ban all uses of PFAS from pesticide products used for mosquito control by the Maryland Department of Agriculture and certified applicators of these chemicals.

PFAS chemicals have a wide variety of uses and have been used for many years worldwide since the 1950s. Known as “forever chemicals”, PFAS does not easily break down in the environment and instead persists, presenting a major public health risk. The primary routes of exposure are contaminated drinking water, contaminated fish, contaminated soil or dust, food packaging material with PFAS and use of products with PFAS such as water repellent clothing or stain resistant materials. Exposure to PFAS has been linked to various health conditions, such as increased cholesterol levels, changes in liver enzymes, decreased vaccine responses in children, increased risk of high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia in pregnant women, low birthweight in infants and increased risk of kidney or testicular cancer.¹ Although the chemical and its dangers to public health are well known, adequate federal legislation to limit the continued dispersal of these chemicals into our environment, food and water has not yet been made. As such, we must act now at the state level to protect our communities before it is too late.

While mosquito control is also an important public health and environmental aspect, there are many alternative chemicals that may be used to control mosquito populations which do not contain PFAS. It is critical that we act at the state level to prevent the further dispersal of these chemicals to our communities. With PFAS found in more than 75% of Maryland community water systems, the clock is ticking to prevent undue harm to residents by limiting these toxic chemicals.² We can no longer wait for federal legislation to act on behalf of Marylanders.

We strongly urge your support for House Bill 570.

The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We support public policies consistent with our vision of healthy Marylanders living in healthy, equitable, communities. MdPHA is the state affiliate of the American

¹ “What Are the Health Effects of PFAS?” Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 24, 2020), <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/health-effects/index.html>.

² Timothy B. Wheeler, “Forever Chemicals’ Frequently Found in Maryland, Pennsylvania Drinking Water,” Bay Journal, September 16, 2021, https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/forever-chemicals-frequently-found-in-maryland-pennsylvania-drinking-water/article_783a8f0c-1707-11ec-ba7f-9f5e631d39c4.html#:~:text=PFAS%2C%20or%20per%E2%80%93%20and%20polyfluoroalkyl,to%20data%20from%20both%20states.

Public Health Association, a nearly 145-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing the health disparities that plague our state and our nation.

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