



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB0387 – Pesticide Regulation – Transfer to Department of the Environment

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 9, 2022

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Sheila Ruth

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members who live in all districts in Montgomery County and in several neighboring jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all residents of our communities healthy and safe in a clean environment. DTMG strongly supports HB0387 because better regulation of toxic pesticides is needed to protect the health of Maryland residents and beneficial insect species.

Pesticides – including insecticides for crop eating insects, herbicides to kill unwanted weeds, and fungicides to kill crop diseases – are applied to crops, but often spread far beyond where they are applied in aerosols and water run-off. They also end up in food we eat. Therefore, regulation of pesticides has to consider more than just their effects on farm crops.

Many pesticides have potentially dangerous health effects for humans and kill essential pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Scientific studies have shown that pesticides contribute to a wide variety of human diseases, including cardiac failure, lung and ovarian cancer, liver and kidney problems, thyroid hormone imbalance, and musculoskeletal diseases including osteoporosis. The pesticide chlorpyrifos, for example, harms infants' brains and neurological development and kills bees. The widely used weed-killer glyphosate has been linked to non-Hodgkin lymphoma. People are exposed to glyphosate through their skin, their eyes, or by breathing it in while using it or by touching plants that are still wet with spray.

In addition, pesticides regularly end up in our food chain, such as by eating food that was sprayed with glyphosate. Glyphosate was found in nearly every sample of popular oat-based cereals and other foods marketed to children. Glyphosate has also been found in grain and bean products, as well as in avocados, apples, blueberries, cherries, cucumbers, dates, dried peas, garlic, lemons, olives, peanuts, pomegranates, potatoes, rice, spinach, sugarcane, tobacco, tomatoes, and walnuts.

Therefore, pesticides are not just an issue for agriculture – they are a problem for all of us who breathe the air and eat food grown on farms. While the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), which currently regulates pesticides, has expertise in how pesticides are used in agriculture, the Department of the Environment (MDE) has broader expertise in toxic substances and how they affect our health. Therefore, MDE, which is tasked with ensuring that our environment is healthy, would be a far better agency to manage decisions and policies regarding toxic pesticides.

HB0387 will accomplish this commonsense transfer and will require MDE to work in conjunction with MDA and the Department of Health to ensure that dangerous pesticides are appropriately used and controlled. HB0387 also includes mechanisms for enforcement, including fines and penalties for violations of the pesticide regulations.

DoTheMostGood therefore strongly supports passage of this important legislation to keep our environment clean and keep Maryland residents healthy, and **we urge a favorable report on HB0387.**

Respectfully submitted,

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