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The Maryland House of Delegates
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Delegate Dana Stein Testimony in Support of HB570
Pesticides – Mosquito Control Products and PFAS Chemicals

Chairwoman Pendergrass, Vice Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

HB 570 deals with PFAS in mosquito sprays. This committee is already familiar with PFAS concerns from the hearing on HB 275, the “George ‘Walter’ Taylor Act.”

Mosquito sprays are used by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) in 2,100 communities each year. They are also used by private companies around homes, schools, and businesses. HB 570 will ensure that when mosquito-control products are used in Maryland, they do not contain PFAS.

This bill requires that manufacturers test for PFAS contamination prior to the sale and use of mosquito sprays in Maryland and allows only PFAS-free products to be bought and used in the state.

This bill is prompted in part by findings by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. That agency detected PFAS chemicals in a number of mosquito-control pesticides used in their state, including two products listed in MDA’s program and a third that’s similar to one used by MDA.

PFAS was not a listed ingredient in these products, yet multiple PFAS chemicals were detected at concerning levels. Of the five most-contaminated mosquito products, the containers used are suspected as the source of PFAS in two. As to the other three products found to have high levels, the source is not known, but the Massachusetts agency noted that it may be attributable to inert ingredients added to the pesticide by the manufacturer.

Two of these sprays, Vectobac and Mavrik Perimeter, are currently listed on MDA’s mosquito-control program website as options. Vectobac contained 5,682 parts per trillion of PFAS and Mavrik contained 16,703 parts per trillion – a very high level of concern.

Mavrik, given its high level of PFAS, is a clear example of a pesticide that should be replaced with a PFAS-free product to protect public health and the environment in Maryland.

In addition, a sample of Permanone, another product used in MDA's mosquito program, was found to be PFAS-contaminated by the EPA-approved lab—with two PFAS chemicals at concerning levels.

You will hear next from experts on why we need to turn off the tap on PFAS in mosquito-control products. I do want to assure you that there are still numerous mosquito pesticides that MDA has and can employ. We just should not be spraying Marylanders inadvertently with PFAS, and it should be the manufacturers that test for safety.

We're fortunate to have Dr. Birnbaum, the former director of National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, back today. She has decades of expertise on both PFAS and pesticides.