



March 2, 2022

SUPPORT: HB570 Pesticides – Mosquito Control Products and PFAS Chemicals

Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk and members of the committee:

We cannot afford to repeat the mistake our country made with lead. Lead was ubiquitous, in everything from telephones to washing machines, dolls to fishing lures, gasoline to paint. However, lead is dangerously toxic. Although the scientific community quickly raised the alarm, the government waited decades before phasing out lead. In the meantime, more people were poisoned and fell ill.

We face a similar public health threat with Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances -- PFAS --that too is found in many elements of modern life. As we noted before this committee on the George “Walter” Taylor Act ([SB 273](#)/[HB 275](#)) PFAS are found in coatings for non-stick pans, food packaging, rugs, carpets, outdoor apparel, firefighting foam and other items.

And, PFAS are also found in widely used mosquito control products.

We must act with urgency to remove this public health threat related to 12,000 PFAS compounds that do not readily break down in the environment or in our bodies. There is also no known way to destroy or safely dispose of them. PFAS have already made their way into our water systems, our food and our bodies.

In fact, [Centers for Disease Control studies](#) indicate exposure to PFAS is extremely widespread across the U.S. And, closer to home, recent testing has detected unsafe levels of PFAS in numerous drinking water samples across Maryland.

As you will hear from public health experts regarding HB570, even very low exposure to PFAS is linked to a myriad of long-term serious health effects.

This committee is considering two critical bills that would protect Marylanders from these “forever chemicals.” While the George “Walter” Taylor Act ([SB 273](#)/[HB 275](#)) would ban the use of PFAS chemicals in firefighting foam, food packaging, rugs and carpets, HB570, the Pesticides – Mosquito Control Products and PFAS Chemicals would ensure that no pesticide product testing positive for PFAS is used as part of any mosquito control activity conducted by the state or any private vendor providing mosquito control services in Maryland.

Recent testing by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection found PFAS at toxic levels in two pesticides listed by the Maryland Department of Agriculture for use in their mosquito control program -- the pesticide Mavrik Perimeter and the larvicide Vectobac. And last year, PFAS were also initially found by an EPA-approved lab at concerning levels in another pesticide, Permanone 30-30, widely used in MDA's mosquito control program and manufactured by Bayer. When EPA used a new, draft test by a different lab, they found no PFAS in the Bayer and MDA-proved samples. It is unclear as to why the second batch tested by EPA was different. You will hear from experts today as to how testing should be conducted.

This bill is critically important because over 2,100 Maryland communities participate in the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Mosquito Control Program and are sprayed throughout the summer and early fall. Thousands of other communities and residents contract with private vendors. We should not unknowingly contaminate people's homes, schools, and workplaces with PFAS.

We need multiple strategies to begin to tackle an emerging PFAS crisis. As with lead, these bills will be the first of many steps to keep us safe from these substances. But for now, together, these two pieces of legislation will provide Maryland residents with immediate and much-needed protections.

Thank you for all your hard work for many years to protect public health and the quality of life for all of us!

Sincerely,

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