



HB-570 Pesticides – Mosquito Control Products and PFAS Chemicals
Hearing before the House
Health and Government Operations Committee
March 3, 2022
Position Support (Favorable)

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility strongly supports HB0570. This bill would prohibit the State, and municipal governments or a certified applicator from applying a mosquito controlling pesticide unless the product has been found to be PFAS free by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) using a test by a lab that is approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) is statewide evidenced-based, organization of over 900 physicians, other health professionals and supporters, that addresses the existential public health threats: nuclear weapons, the climate crisis and the issues of pollution and toxics' effect on health as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, social and racial justice. As an organization founded by physicians, we understand that prevention is far superior to treatment in reducing costs; death, illness, injury, and suffering.

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

PFAS are a man-made family of 6000-12,000 forever fluorinated chemicals¹ called forever because they are very slow to degrade and therefore bioaccumulate in humans, fish and our environment resulting in serious adverse health effects.

Human exposure to PFAS occur through ingestion of contaminated drinking water, fish, and other foods, air, inhalation of indoor air, and contact with other contaminated material.² With long biological half-lives as well as environmental persistence, they are detected in the blood of nearly all people in the developed world. PFAS cross the placenta and are present in breast

¹ <https://comptox.epa.gov/dashboard/chemical-lists/PFASDEV1>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6380916/>
<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/health-effects/exposure.html#:~:text=Workers%20may%20be%20exposed%20to,your%20body%20through%20your%20skin>

milk.³ For toddlers and other children, intake is twice that of older groups with in utero and breast-feeding major routes of their exposure.⁴

Recently, scientists for Public Employees Environmental Responsibility (PEER) have found PFAS in several mosquito control pesticide products they have tested.⁵ The EPA acknowledged that it found them in some of the plastic containers used to store PFAS. PEER has found PFAS in some products that were stored in metal containers and raise additional possibilities for contamination including as inert ingredients in some cases.⁶

This matters because of serious adverse health effects of PFAS that some leading scientists have even said may be **caused** by these chemicals like impaired immune response, kidney cancer and elevated cholesterol.⁷ The authors of a recent review concluded with high certainty these health effects are related to PFAS exposure: kidney cancer, testicular cancer, liver damage. (associated with fatty liver), altered thyroid hormone levels, high cholesterol (increase serum total cholesterol and the fraction we usually associate with heart disease, in adults and children), low birth weight, reduced immune response including a reduced response to vaccines after exposure to the chemicals in utero.⁸ A court ordered study, the C8 Health Study, as part of a settlement against a Dupont plant that caused water contamination of over 70,000 residents, found a link between one major PFAS chemical and increased cholesterol, kidney cancer, testicular cancer, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, and pregnancy -induced hypertension.⁹ A Harvard School of Public Health study from Denmark linked bad outcomes for COVID-19 with elevated blood PFAS levels including some compounds known to accumulate in the lungs.¹⁰ In the midst of a pandemic, it is of great concern to raise the possibility of a link between PFAS chemical exposure and impaired immune response.

For all of these reasons, Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility strongly supports HB 570, a bill to test mosquito control pesticides for the harmful ubiquitous, forever family of chemicals known as PFAS and ban their use, when found, before they can continue to pollute our environment and harm children and adults.

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³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7906952/>

⁴ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2903/j.efsa.2020.6223>

⁵ [https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/forever-chemicals-found-in-mosquito-spray/article_f159caae-be44-11eb-a307-](https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/forever-chemicals-found-in-mosquito-spray/article_f159caae-be44-11eb-a307-136f1e350242.html#:~:text=A%20pair%20of%20environmental%20groups,well%20as%20in%20other%20states.)

[136f1e350242.html#:~:text=A%20pair%20of%20environmental%20groups,well%20as%20in%20other%20states.](https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/forever-chemicals-found-in-mosquito-spray/article_f159caae-be44-11eb-a307-136f1e350242.html#:~:text=A%20pair%20of%20environmental%20groups,well%20as%20in%20other%20states.)

⁶ [https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/pesticides/documents2/bd_mtgs/jul21/12b_CLF%20&%20PEER%20PFAS-in-Pesticides%20Letter%20\(ME\).pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/pesticides/documents2/bd_mtgs/jul21/12b_CLF%20&%20PEER%20PFAS-in-Pesticides%20Letter%20(ME).pdf)

⁷ <https://theintercept.com/2019/10/24/pfas-toxicologist/>

⁸ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7906952/>

⁹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7530144/>

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<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0244815>

