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## **FAVORABLE Report – HOUSE BILL 0319: Pesticide Regulation – PFAS Testing – Requirements**

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

We are writing in strong support of **HB0319** on behalf of Waterkeepers Chesapeake, a coalition of seventeen Waterkeepers, Riverkeepers, and Coastkeepers working to make the waters of the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays swimmable and fishable. As we at Waterkeepers work to protect and maintain the ability of the public to safely enjoy the waters of our state, we are in support of restricting the use of PFAS, a class of chemicals that the Environmental Protection Agency says can cause harmful health effects in humans. PFAS chemicals are man-made chemicals that don't break down in the environment or in our bodies, earning them the nickname "forever chemicals." They have been linked to negative health impacts including cancer and reproductive problems. These chemicals have made their way into our drinking water, the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the soil, our food, and consequently, our bodies.

**Waterkeepers Chesapeake believe this bill is important in the race against preventing further PFAS contamination to our local waterways and land.** On the Clean Water Act's 50th Anniversary on October 18, 2022, Waterkeeper Alliance released [\*Invisible, Unbreakable, Unnatural\*](#), a groundbreaking new analysis of American waterways that sounds the alarm on a PFAS pollution emergency. In the Chesapeake Bay region, 16 local Waterkeepers took 39 samples from rivers and streams. In 100% of the samples, levels of PFAS were found. To make matters worse, the level for PFOA and PFOS detected in this study is significantly higher than EPA's Drinking Water Health Advisory Limits for those substances. Requiring all manufacturers of pesticides in the

state to provide annual independent lab testing and certification to document that their pesticide is PFAS-free would be a major step towards protecting our waterways. Currently, the EPA has not addressed the critical issues of PFAS intentionally added to pesticides by manufacturers or of PFAS contamination of pesticides from fluorinated containers. Maryland must take action at the state level to protect the health of Maryland residents and the environment amidst this emerging crisis.

Maryland farmers tend to bear the brunt of the lack of appropriate testing and regulation of pesticide products. In 2022, studies estimated that [57,000 sites in the U.S. can be presumed contaminated](#) based on other confirmed sources of PFAS that are already being tracked. One of those sources was sewage sludge, which has already contaminated farms in multiple states. Waterkeepers Chesapeake supports this bill and its expressed goals. By preventing the harmful use of PFAS in pesticides, the state can show its priorities are with protecting communities and the environment, as opposed to the chemical industry. Therefore, we believe these requirements would properly be carried out under **HB0319** in order to establish criteria to ensure appropriate testing and regulation of pesticide products to better protect all Marylanders' health, adults—especially pregnant women—and children.

For these reasons stated above, we urge the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB0319**.

Sincerely,

**Waterkeepers Chesapeake and partnering farmers signed below:**

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