



Position: Supporting HB 319: Pesticide Registration - PFAS Testing - Requirements Bill

Submitted to: House Health and Government Operations Committee (HGO)

Submitted by: MOM's Organic Market

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I am Celange Beck, Environmental & Partnership Coordinator representing MOM's Organic Market. Ten of our twenty-three stores are located in Maryland, serving thousands of Marylanders daily. Our customers demonstrate their concern about pesticide exposure and toxins in the environment by choosing organic. We strongly support the Pesticide Regulation - PFAS Testing - Requirements Bill and ask for your favorable vote.

PFAS introduced through pesticides used in agriculture, mosquito control products, and other uses constitute yet another toxic and unnecessary exposure to dangerous chemicals that have far-reaching harmful effects for all citizens of Maryland. Mosquito control pesticides are applied to Maryland communities, parks, and lawns, exposing families and children to direct harm from PFAS. Children exposed to PFAS will carry these chemicals in their bodies forever. The discovery of PFAS in food grown in fields with commonly used pesticides containing PFAS is an alarming, almost unimaginable public health threat. So too, when DDT, lead paint, and CFCs were found to have overwhelming harm on wildlife, our children, and the ozone layer. Yet, by our leaders taking concrete steps to eliminate these threats, what was once perceived as insurmountable became achievable. Positive reports on the repair of our ozone layer are a recent example of what we need to do to turn off the tap of PFAS in pesticides, which is contaminating our food, our bodies, soil, and waterways.

Maryland must protect its residents and our environment from this hazard. The first crucial step to turning off this tap is for this HGO Committee to pass **HB 319**.

MOM's Purpose is *to protect and restore the environment*. Since 2014, we have held an annual "Save the Dandelions" campaign to help raise awareness of the effects that toxic pesticides and herbicides have on our environment, wildlife, pollinators, and health. In past and current legislative sessions, we have advocated for bills that ban PFAS in food and wellness products. This bill is a part of the work we have been passionate about for years and will continue to advocate for.

PFAS, or "forever chemicals," are harmful man-made chemicals that do not break down in our natural environment. They are introduced into our environment through food, wellness, agriculture, and other products and make their way into our soils, waterways, and bodies. They are linked to cancer, developmental issues, congenital disabilities, thyroid disease, liver and kidney impairment, more severe Covid-19 infection, and much more.

In addition to advocating for the regulation of pesticides and PFAS, we consider it our responsibility to educate our consumers - many of whom are mothers of children - about the harms of these substances. PFAS are still a relatively obscure topic to the average citizen, which has helped manufacturers fly under the radar of state regulations and environmental departments. PFAS have gone unregulated for far too long.

Now is the time to regulate pesticides and PFAS. We call on Maryland Legislators to ensure there are no PFAS in mosquito control products and pesticides in the state.