

**Committee: Environment and Transportation****Testimony on: HB1342 Pesticide and Pest Control – State-Owned Property – Pesticide Use Restrictions and Pollinator Habitat****Position: Support****Hearing Date: March 5, 2025**

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB1342 because of its benefits to people, pollinators, other wildlife, and native plants.

Excessive use of pesticides is one of the primary contributors to the global biodiversity crisis.<sup>1</sup> One recent study found that “of an estimated eight million animal and [plant species](#) (75% of which are insects), around one million are threatened with extinction.”<sup>2</sup>

Within Maryland, there are 28 bee species that are rare, threatened, or endangered, according to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, including the Rusty-patched bumble bee.<sup>3</sup> While there are numerous causes of bee declines, research has shown that the negative effects of pesticides are widespread and significant. Neonicotinoid and pyrethroid use is a major driver of changes across hundreds of wild bee species in the U.S. One recent study concluded that in some groups, “high pesticide use contributes to a 43.3% decrease in the probability that a species occurs at a site. These results suggest that mechanisms that reduce pesticide use (such as integrative pest management) can potentially facilitate pollination conservation.”<sup>4</sup>

Many Americans are also aware of the stunning decline in our beloved Eastern monarch butterflies, part of another important pollinator group, whose populations have decreased by more than 80% since the 1990’s.<sup>5</sup> In addition to loss of habitat, pesticide usage is a significant contributor to the decline.

Native plants are the keystone food for much of our wildlife, including important native pollinators. Of the 100 crop species that supply 90% of human nutrition, over 70 require bee pollination.<sup>6</sup> Many of our major crops rely on native bees, including squash, pumpkins, tomatoes, blueberries, cranberries, and sunflowers. According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), for almost all crops, native bees are the primary pollinator, or they significantly supplement the activity of European honeybees.<sup>7</sup>

It makes sense for Maryland’s Department of Agriculture to develop a model pesticide plan to be implemented on State-owned and managed property, and to restrict application to listed or

registered pesticides. It is crucial that pesticide usage does not undermine public health or efforts to support native plants and wildlife habitats in Maryland.

We respectfully request a favorable report for HB1342.

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1 Brondizio, J. et al., IPBES 2019. Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673>

2 van der Sluijs, J. 2020. Insect decline, an emerging global environmental risk. Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability, 46:39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2020.08.012>

3 Maryland Department of Natural Resources. 2023. List of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Animals of Maryland, November 2023. [https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/rte\\_Animal\\_List.pdf](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/rte_Animal_List.pdf)

4 Guzman, L. 2024. Impact of pesticide use on wild bee distributions across the United States. Nature Sustainability, 7:1324. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-024-01413-8>

5 Xerces Society. Accessed 2025. Eastern Monarch Conservation. <https://xerces.org/monarchs/eastern-monarch-conservation#:~:text=Monarch%20butterflies%20east%20of%20the,needed%20for%20the%20monarch's%20survival>

6 United Nations. 2011. Humans must change behaviour to save bees, vital for food production – UN Report., United Nations UN News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/03/368622>

7 USGS, 2024. What is the role of native bees in the United States? <https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-role-native-bees-united-states>