



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HOUSE BILL 1342

**Pesticide and Pest Control - State-Owned Property - Pesticide Use Restrictions and
Pollinator Habitat**

SUPPORT

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chair, and Esteemed Colleagues:

For the record I'm Delegate Mary Lehman asking for your favorable report of HB 1342.

The goal of HB 1342 is to require units of state government, that are not already doing so, to better manage pesticide use to benefit the health and environment of Marylanders. The bill requires state government organizations managing state-owned property to develop pesticide management plans banning the use of certain toxic pesticides only for aesthetic purposes. These plans must only allow for the use of pesticides that pose less risk. The bill exempts DNR and SHA because both are required by prior legislation to develop and implement pollinator management plans, including pesticide management provisions for pesticides which are toxic to pollinators.

According to the USDA's report on Maryland pesticide statistics, over 3 million pounds of pesticides were used in Maryland in 2022. 85% of this total (or 2.6 million pounds) were herbicides for weed control. This represents a 33% increase in pesticide usage over what was applied in 2020. Although there are many good reasons to use herbicides to control weeds -- for example, in agriculture weed control helps improve crop yields -- the use of EPA registered herbicides for purely aesthetic purposes introduces toxic chemicals into the environment only for the purpose of improving the visual appeal of an area.

This bill represents a relatively small step forward to reduce the amount of more toxic pesticides applied by units of state government on state property for purely aesthetic purposes. The bill requires:

- MDA be in partnership with DNR to develop a model pesticide management plan that would then be used by other units of state government that manage state-owned property to develop plans for the tracts of land they manage.
- That the MDA and DNR model plan essentially prohibit the use of more toxic pesticides for purely aesthetic purposes on state-owned land.

- Units of state government other than DNR and SHA that own or manage land to use the model pesticide management plan to develop and implement tract level plans.
- The bill does not intend to limit the use of more toxic pesticides for other than aesthetic purposes. For example, the bill allows the use of EPA registered pesticides for controlling pests while engaged in agriculture, for controlling invasive species and disease vectors, and for weed managements for other than aesthetic purposes.
- The bill exempts DNR and SHA from compliance with the requirement to develop pesticide management plans because they are already required by legislation passed in 2016 (and amended in 2017) to have in place and implement pollinator management plans for properties under their management.

It is important for Maryland to do what it can to reduce environmental loading of toxic pesticides whose sole purpose is to improve the appearance of a tract of state-owned land.

HB1342 helps ensure that registered pesticides are not used on state owned property for purely aesthetic purposes.

Thank you and I urge your favorable report.

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