



Maryland Farm Bureau

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February 10, 2025

To: House Health and Government Operations Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: Opposition of HB386 - Pesticides - PFAS Chemicals - Prohibitions

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in opposition of HB386 Pesticides - PFAS Chemicals - Prohibitions. This legislation would require the Department of Agriculture to develop and maintain a list of registered pesticides that list PFAS chemicals as an active ingredient on the label and prohibit for use beginning June 1, 2028.

While environmental safety is a priority for farmers, banning an entire class of pesticides without viable alternatives threatens agricultural productivity. Many of these pesticides are integral in managing pests that can devastate crops, and their removal would place an undue burden on farmers struggling to maintain yields in an already volatile agricultural economy.

One of the foundational principles of effective pest management is the ability to rotate pesticides with different modes of action. This practice is essential in preventing weed and insect resistance, which has become an increasing challenge in modern agriculture. With fewer pesticide options available, farmers will be forced to rely more heavily on a limited set of alternatives, accelerating resistance and ultimately reducing the effectiveness of all pest control measures. This bill fails to account for the unintended consequence of increasing resistance and reducing the long-term viability of crop protection strategies.

House Bill 386 applies restrictions to all uses of PFAS pesticides, including in broad agricultural applications. While there are valid concerns about the potential risks of PFAS exposure in non-agricultural settings such as schools and healthcare facilities, lumping agricultural usage into the same category ignores the critical differences in application, exposure levels, and risk mitigation strategies used in farming.

Many of the pesticides targeted in this bill play a crucial role in integrated pest management (IPM) strategies. Without them, farmers will be left without effective means to combat invasive weeds, fungi, and insects that threaten crop yields. This could lead to increased reliance on mechanical and cultural control methods, which may not be as effective, sustainable, or feasible for all operations.

If certain pesticides are to be phased out, it is imperative that farmers have access to equally effective and affordable alternatives. This legislation does not provide a clear plan for replacing banned pesticides with viable substitutes, nor does it address how farmers can adapt to the

sudden loss of essential crop protection tools. The result could be increased production costs, reduced crop yields, and economic hardship for farmers.

While we support efforts to ensure environmental safety, House Bill 386 takes a broad and restrictive approach that fails to consider the unique needs of agriculture. Maryland Farm Bureau respectfully opposes HB386 and urges an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Hough", is written below a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and stylized.

Tyler Hough
Director of Government Relations

Please reach out to Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions