



Committee: Health and Government Operations

Testimony on: – HB386

Pesticides – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibitions

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: 2/12/2025

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility strongly supports HB386, a bill restricting use in Maryland of pesticides by June 1, 2026 that are listed by the Department of Agriculture to contain PFAS as active ingredients, and Department of Agriculture may not register such pesticides for sale in Maryland as of June 1, 2027.

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) is a statewide evidence-based organization of over 900 physicians and other health professionals and supporters that addresses existential public health threats: nuclear weapons, the climate crisis, and the issues of pollution and toxic effects on health, as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, racial and social justice.

PFAS is a dangerous family of forever, ubiquitous fluorinated chemicals called “forever” because the dense fluorine-carbon bonds are very strong and they are very slow to degrade and therefore bioaccumulate in humans, fish and our environment resulting in serious adverse health effects. Since this bill addresses pesticides that contain a PFAS chemical, as listed as an active ingredient, it removes the necessity and uncertainty regarding testing for its presence.

Measurable levels of PFAS are in the blood of nearly all who live in the developed countries.¹ Human exposure to PFASs occurs through ingestion of contaminated drinking water, fish, and other foods, air, inhalation of indoor air, and contact with other contaminated material.² It crosses the placenta and is present in breast milk.³

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7906952/>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6380916/>

³ <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/health-effects/exposure.html> - :~:text=Workers may be exposed to,your body through your skin

This matters because of serious adverse effects health effects of PFAS. The former director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Toxicology Program has said that impaired immune response, kidney cancer and elevated cholesterol in children and adults are **caused** by PFAS chemicals, after decades of reviewing research on the subject.⁴ In a recent review, the authors concluded that high certainty PFAS health effects include: kidney cancer, testicular cancer, liver damage (associated with fatty liver), altered thyroid hormone levels, high cholesterol (increase serum total cholesterol and the fraction we usually associate with heart disease, in adults and children), low birth weight, reduced immune response including a reduced response to vaccines after exposures in utero.⁵ A report by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine attested to the association between PFAS exposure and increased risk of altered immune response, decreased infant and fetal growth, high cholesterol and risk of kidney cancer.⁶ A court ordered study, the C8 Health Study as part of a settlement against a Dupont plant that caused water contamination of over 70,000 residents, found a link between one major PFAS chemical and increased cholesterol, kidney cancer, testicular cancer, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, and pregnancy-induced hypertension.⁷ A Harvard School of Public Health study from Denmark linked more serious outcomes for COVID-19 with elevated blood PFAS levels for one of the less common PFAS chemicals known to accumulate in the lungs.⁸ When they are listed ingredients in a pesticide, we know that PFAS is in the product and therefore, this product should not be for sale in Maryland.

Therefore, ***Chesapeake PSR strongly supports HB386***, a bill to ensure that no pesticides registered for sale and use in Maryland contain PFAS chemicals as an active ingredient. CPSR has always advocated on the principal that it is important to prevent what we cannot treat.

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⁴ <https://theintercept.com/2019/10/24/pfas-toxicologist/>

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7906952/>

⁶ <https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2022/07/new-report-calls-for-expanded-pfas-testing-for-people-with-history-of-elevated-exposure-offers-advice-for-clinical-treatment>

⁷ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7530144/>

⁸ <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0244815>