



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

House Bill 386 Pesticides - PFAS Chemicals - Prohibitions

Date: February 12, 2025

To: Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: **FAVORABLE**

From: Gussie Maguire,
MD Staff Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 386, which prohibits the sale and, by 2028, use of pesticides containing known PFAS chemicals as an active ingredient on their label.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a class of chemicals which break down very slowly in the environment and have toxic and carcinogenic effects on biological organisms. Furthermore, PFAS chemicals accumulate in tissues of soft-bodied organisms like worms and clams in the aquatic and marine environment and are further magnified through the food chain to higher order organisms such as fish and crabs. In at least 20 of Maryland's waterways, the Department of the Environment has issued fish consumption advisories for PFAS. Notably, the Department recommends entirely avoiding consuming fish caught in Piscataway Creek due to the extremely high levels of PFAS present in fish tissue¹.

The delivery pathway of these chemicals via agricultural pesticides is of particular concern, as field runoff flows from agricultural ditches and drainage structures to surface waters without filtration. PFAS detection, treatment, and removal technologies continue to evolve for use in drinking water and wastewater treatment, but these methods are expensive, and impractical for removing PFAS from agricultural runoff. Furthermore, when PFAS chemicals eventually do break down, the short-chain components that remain are still harmful, and even more difficult to remove from the environment².

HB 386 appropriately addresses the environmental and human health risks posed by PFAS-containing pesticide application.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 386.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

¹ MDE Fish Consumption Advisories: <https://mdewin64.mde.state.md.us/WSA/FCA/index.html>

² Donley et al. (2024) Forever pesticides: A growing source of PFAS contamination in the environment. <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/ehp13954>

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.