



## HB386- Pesticides – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibition

House Committee on Health and Government Operations

February 12, 2025

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Clean Water Action, I am writing to express our strong support for HB386, legislation that mandates the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop and maintain a list of registered pesticides containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as their active ingredient and to phase out their use within the state. This bill is a necessary step in safeguarding public health, protecting our environment, and ensuring the well-being of all Marylanders and especially our vulnerable populations.

PFAS, commonly referred to as "forever chemicals," are synthetic compounds that persist in the environment and accumulate in living organisms, leading to long-term health and ecological consequences. PFAS-pesticides used throughout Maryland poses a significant threat to our waterways, including the Patuxent River, the Potomac River, Susquehanna River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. These vital water bodies are sources of drinking water for millions of Marylanders, supporting recreational activities and biodiversity. The contamination of these waterways with PFAS jeopardizes both environmental and human health.

Once PFAS enter waterways, they do not break down naturally and instead bioaccumulate in aquatic life, leading to widespread contamination. This contamination extends through the food chain, affecting fish, wildlife, and ultimately humans. Drinking water sources throughout Maryland are at risk, as PFAS leach into groundwater and surface water supplies.

The human health effects of PFAS exposure are well-documented. Research has linked PFAS ingestion to an increased risk of cancers, immune system suppression, thyroid disease, liver damage, and developmental harm to infants and children. **Alarmingly, PFAS have been detected in Maryland's drinking water sources, putting countless residents at risk of chronic exposure** In addition to the millions of Marylanders who drink from these PFAS polluted rivers, in spot testing of wells conducted by MDE, PFAS was a contaminant in Carroll, Howard, Harford, Washington, Wicomico Counties, and in numerous water treatment systems. including some supplying schools. [Methods for removing some PFAS from drinking water are expensive and at an early stage](#). Currently, there are no technologies for removing many PFAS-pesticides from our drinking water.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency set [drinking water standards for six PFAS](#), commonly known as "forever chemicals," in April 2024. Regulators were close to almost establishing a discharge limit for PFAS manufacturers when in [January 2025 President Trump issued a](#)

[sweeping executive order withdrawing proposed regulations](#). Prior to the current federal administration, the US EPA set an enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level for PFOA and PFOS in drinking water at 4.0 parts per trillion and others at 10 ppt.

A study conducted by the Maryland Pesticide Education Network, in collaboration with researchers from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, assessed PFAS levels in Maryland residents' blood and found that all participants had PFAS levels, with the majority warranting further medical screening. Participants came from all over the state. This initiative underscores the urgent need for comprehensive monitoring and regulation of PFAS exposure in our communities.

The widespread presence of PFAS-pesticides, whereby the active ingredient is a PFAS, exacerbates the problem, as agricultural and landscape applications allow these chemicals to infiltrate soils and waterways. Without proper oversight and regulation, PFAS-pesticides will continue to contaminate Maryland's ecosystems and drinking water supplies, disproportionately impacting communities already burdened by environmental pollution.

HB386 presents a crucial opportunity for Maryland to take meaningful action in addressing PFAS contamination. By requiring the Maryland Department of Agriculture to identify and phase out PFAS-pesticides, this legislation will help mitigate further pollution, reduce human exposure, and set a precedent for responsible environmental stewardship.

We urge the Health and Government Operations Committee to support HB386 and ensure its swift passage. Maryland has the chance to lead in the fight against PFAS pollution, safeguarding our water resources and protecting public health for generations to come. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Ranson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Emily Ranson  
Chesapeake Regional Director  
Clean Water Action