

February 2, 2026

Chairman Marc Kornan,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding HB0091. On behalf of the Southern Crop Production Association (SCPA), we respectfully oppose this legislation and urge the Committee to issue an unfavorable report.

SCPA is a regional, non-profit trade association representing pesticide registrants, agricultural retailers, and distributors who supply essential crop production tools to farmers and ranchers. Our more than 50 member companies span the research, development, manufacturing, and distribution of agricultural inputs—including crop protection products, seeds, traits, seed treatments, and biologics. Serving sixteen states across the South, including Maryland. SCPA is widely recognized by industry stakeholders and state and federal regulators as the primary regional voice for the crop production industry, providing trusted advocacy and leadership on issues affecting Southern agriculture.

HB0091 would restrict or prohibit the sale and use of certain agricultural inputs that Maryland farmers rely on to manage early-season pest pressure and protect seeds and seedlings. If enacted, this bill would remove critical tools from growers' integrated pest management (IPM) programs and undermine science-based regulatory systems already in place at both the federal and state levels.

Maryland agriculture is diverse, with significant specialty crop production and growers operating within narrow planting and harvest windows. For many of these crops, there are limited—or no—effective alternatives available to replace the products targeted by this legislation. Early-season pest damage cannot always be remedied after planting, and in many cases replanting is not feasible. The loss of these tools would directly threaten crop viability, farm income, and ultimately food availability and affordability for consumers.

SCPA is particularly concerned that HB0091 fails to acknowledge the robust regulatory framework governing pesticide products in the United States. Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducts extensive, science-based evaluations of pesticides before approving them for sale and use. These reviews assess potential impacts on human health, wildlife, pollinators, and the environment, and registrations are revisited regularly to reflect the best available science.

In addition to EPA oversight, states maintain their own registration, compliance, and enforcement programs, creating a dual layer of protection that ensures pesticides are used safely and responsibly. This system is specifically designed to manage risk while preserving farmers' access to effective pest control tools. Legislative bans that preempt this process disregard decades of scientific investment and regulatory expertise.

Many of the products implicated by bills like HB0091 were initially approved as “reduced risk” alternatives, offering improved environmental and safety profiles compared to older chemistries. These tools are an important part of modern, climate-resilient agriculture, enabling farmers to use more targeted, lower-volume applications and reduce the need for multiple broadcast treatments.

Seed treatments, in particular, provide a precise and efficient means of protecting crops during their most vulnerable growth stages. These products undergo the same rigorous evaluation as other pesticides, including assessments of potential impacts on non-target organisms. They also come with strict labeling, handling, and stewardship requirements designed to minimize environmental exposure.

If seed treatment options are eliminated, growers may be forced to rely on increased applications of alternative products, often at higher use rates and with greater environmental footprints. This outcome runs counter to the stated goals of sustainability, pollinator protection, and responsible land stewardship.

It is unclear what specific regulatory gap or safety concern HB0091 is intended to address, given the extensive oversight already in place. Farmers have a direct stake in protecting pollinators, soil health, and surrounding ecosystems, and they depend on science-based regulation—not blanket prohibitions—to do so effectively.

SCPA believes that policy decisions affecting agriculture should be grounded in sound science, real-world data, and meaningful engagement with growers. Removing proven tools without viable alternatives does not eliminate pest pressure—it simply shifts risk, cost, and uncertainty onto farmers and rural communities.

For these reasons, we respectfully oppose HB0091 and urge the Committee to reject this legislation. Maryland farmers deserve access to the full range of federally approved, scientifically evaluated tools necessary to remain productive, competitive, and environmentally responsible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bucky Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bucky Kennedy

Executive Vice-President