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Humane Society International

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March 4, 2026

Environment and Transportation Committee
HB1237 - Pesticide Applications - Subscription Contract Requirements and Registry Establishment
FAVORABLE

Humane World for Animals, on behalf of our supporters across Maryland, respectfully urges a favorable report on HB1237. This bill represents a thoughtful and necessary step to safeguard the well-being of Maryland residents, their companion animals, and local wildlife by improving transparency, choice, and accountability regarding the application of pesticides in residential communities.

HB 1237 modernizes Maryland's pesticide oversight framework by requiring straightforward disclosure of the products being applied and establishing a Residential Pollinator Protection and Neighbor Notification Registry. The Registry reflects an innovative approach to shared environmental responsibility by acknowledging an often-overlooked reality: chemicals applied in one yard do not often stay there. Drift, runoff, and residue can move beyond property lines, exposing vulnerable community members, pets, and backyard pollinators without warning. By ensuring that neighbors who share property boundaries and abut managed greenspaces can receive timely notice of planned pesticide applications, including information about active ingredients and relevant safety precautions, the bill empowers Marylanders to take reasonable steps to prevent avoidable harm.

The risks of unintended pesticide exposure are well-documented. Animals may encounter pesticides through direct contact with treated surfaces or by ingesting contaminated prey, such as rodents who have consumed toxic bait. Even products marketed as "less toxic" can present dangers depending on the amount and mode of exposure. Companion animals are particularly vulnerable because of their proximity to treated lawns and gardens, along with their propensity to groom themselves, which increases ingestion risk.¹ It is also well documented that neighbor-to-neighbor, yard-to-home transfer of pesticide residues into rooms of a home can occur via pets, shoes, air and even chemicals migrating

¹ National Pesticide Information Center (2025, August 6). *Pesticides and animal health*.
<https://npic.orst.edu/health/animhealth.html>.



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through soil and entering buildings as vapor through foundation slabs and basement walls.^{2,3} Contamination risk is not limited to homes where pesticides are directly applied.⁴ Providing advance notice and clear product information is therefore not merely a courtesy; it is a meaningful public health safeguard.

Pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects are equally at risk. Research documents widespread pesticide contamination in pollen, soil, and plant tissues - even in areas intended to attract pollinators - affirming that pesticides can travel through multiple environmental pathways, expose various species unintentionally, and cause persistent, long-lasting harm.⁵ Additional research has linked increased use of certain pesticides with declines in wild bee populations, an outcome with serious implications for ecosystem stability and agricultural viability.⁶ By creating a registry that identifies properties with pollinator gardens or habitats and requires pesticide applicators to exercise care with pesticide drift in proximate areas, HB 1237 helps align residential property management practices with broader pollinator protection goals.

The bill also reinforces the importance of informed consent in wildlife management by strengthening communication between licensed applicators and their customers. Requiring disclosure of pesticide use and encouraging consideration of less toxic or non-chemical alternatives helps align Maryland law with modern integrated pest management principles and reduces the harm to the urban ecosystems that we are all actively working to support.

² Nishioka, M. G., Burkholder, H. M., Brinkman, M. C., & Lewis, R. G. (1999). Distribution of 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic Acid in Floor Dust throughout Homes Following Homeowner and Commercial Lawn Applications: Quantitative Effects of Children, Pets, and Shoes. *Environmental Science & Technology*, 33(9), 1359-1365. <https://doi.org/10.1021/es980580o>.

³ Nishioka, M.G., Lewis, R.G., Brinkman, M.C., Burkholder, H.M., Hines, C.E., & Menkedick, J.R. (2001). Distribution of 2,4-D in Air and on Surfaces Inside Residences after Lawn Applications: Comparing Exposure Estimates from Various Media for Young Children. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 109(11), 1185–1191. <https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.011091185>

⁴ Li, Z.M., Jeong, H., & Kannan, K. (2024). Widespread occurrence of glyphosate and aminomethylphosphonic acid in indoor dust from urban homes across the United States and its contribution to human exposure. *Environment International*, 192, 109036. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2024.109036>

⁵ Environmental Health Program, U.S. Geological Survey. (2022, May 23). *Pesticides detected in bees, flowers, soil, and air within pollinator-attractive row-crop border plantings*. <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/environmental-health-program/science/pesticides-detected-bees-flowers-soil-and-air-within>.

⁶ Guzman, L.M., et al. (2024). Impact of pesticide use on wild bee distributions across the United States. *Nature Sustainability*, 7, 1324–1334. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-024-01413-8>. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-024-01413-8>



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HB 1237 demands the communication, care, and accountability Marylanders deserve when pesticides are applied in residential communities. By prioritizing transparency and prevention, the bill helps protect people, pets, and wildlife from unnecessary harm. For these reasons, Humane World for Animals respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 1237.

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