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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SPONSOR TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1237**  
**PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS -**  
**SUBSCRIPTION CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS AND REGISTRY ESTABLISHMENT**

Delegate Sheila Ruth

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Maryland has one of the highest population densities of all US states, so many of us understand the pros and cons of living in close proximity to our neighbors. Another issue we face in a climate like ours is dealing with pests, especially with our humid summers. It's no surprise that many of our neighbors don't want to deal with these nuisances and so hire businesses to treat their property for pesticides. However, despite the fact that most only harbor ill-will to pests and not their neighbors, these treatments can end up causing harm to their health and property regardless as some people, flora, and fauna are more sensitive to pesticides. This is what HB1237 aims to address in two important ways: by regulating certain conduct of residential pest control businesses and by creating a new registry to track treatment.

Firstly, this bill will ensure best practices are followed by requiring all pest control businesses hired for treatment subscription contracts with residential customers to inspect the resident's property before pesticides are used and share the findings and any recommendations based on them with the customer, including if non-chemical methods like sanitation, property site management or landscape architecture would reduce the need for pesticides. The inspection and communication efforts need to be added to the documentation already required by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA).

Secondly, the bill establishes a Pollinator Protection and Neighbor Notification Registry within MDA. Anyone interested in being notified when pesticides are going to be applied on contiguous or adjacent properties to theirs can sign up and note whether or not they or another member of their household should avoid pesticide exposure due to a sensitivity or a diagnosed condition or ailment, whether pets or other domestic animals reside on their property, and/or if a pollinator garden or other wildlife habitat can be found on that property. To minimize operational impact, this provision builds on MDA's existing Sensitive Persons registry.

If someone has registered to be on this list, which will be distributed at least once per year (or more should MDA decide) to licensed residential pest control businesses, any business must notify them in advance if they are to apply pesticide treatment to a contiguous property or one adjacent to theirs. If they have animals or pollinator gardens on their property, businesses must avoid as much as possible applying pesticides near any animals or gardens or in a way that easily allows the product to drift over into the adjacent property. This must also be recorded under standard MDA documentation requirements.

Additionally, should an individual request it, the business then must provide them with certain information like their business name and license number, contact information, common name and EPA registration number of the pesticide and its active ingredient the business plans to apply.

This information is important for people who may be exposed to pesticides to have access to, because pesticides and various other chemicals have been shown to have detrimental effects on the health of humans with certain health conditions and the health of animals, as well as on the preservation of pollinator gardens, where, particularly if they are not applied very carefully, those chemicals can kill sensitive non-nuisance plants and animals that are beneficial to our health and our environment, not just the pests they target.

This bill is *not* about hurting businesses: these regulations do not apply to agricultural land (or any land owned or managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources [DNR]), even if a residence is present on them. It does not ban pesticides or their use nor does it prohibit residents from hiring pesticide services.

This bill is *not* about burdening our government: I've made an effort to ensure that MDA has significant agency in how requirements are decided and structured like the ability to decide which pest control categories they apply to and to charge a registration fee to aid in implementation of the registry (with the exception of those who can provide documentation of conditions that could be exacerbated by pesticide exposure, for whom any fee must be waived), and I welcome continued partnerships with them and other departments - like DNR, whose amendment regarding exempting land they manage I already filed - to tweak this bill so it works best for the most people (and animals, and plants!).

This bill *is* about protecting the health and safety of Marylanders, their families, their pets, and their property through transparency and responsible business practices. It simply allows those who have concerns with pesticide exposure to avoid any unpleasant surprises and gives them more control over their own lives and their own property. Because of this, I ask for a favorable report on HB1237.