

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB1237 - Pesticide Applications – Subscription Contract Requirements and Registry Establishment
Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 4, 2026

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members

I am urging support of HB1237 – Pesticide Applications – Subscription Contract Requirements and Registry Establishment.

I live in suburban Montgomery County where the properties of five neighbors are contiguous to our property. We have intentionally removed most of our grass, replacing it primarily with native species of all sizes. In spring and summer, I enjoy opening our windows to hear and observe the numerous insects, birds and small mammals attracted to our garden.

Most commercial contracts for mosquito sprays use pyrethroids, which are a class of broad spectrum insecticides that disrupt the nervous systems of insects, causing paralysis and death. In short, they are neurotoxins.

I have been deeply concerned about drift of pyrethroids onto our lawn from the properties of two of our neighbors. The first year two neighbors contracted for periodic sprays, I noticed a significant diminution of bees on our property. Having been subject to aerial spraying of stronger mosquito pesticides in Miami as a child, i.e., at an age when people are particularly sensitive to their impacts on neurological diseases, I was also quite concerned for my own health.

Reducing mosquito populations is important. As our local temperatures and warm weather season increases, dangerous mosquito borne diseases are migrating into our area. But increasingly, a broad range of safer and effective alternatives are available. As a result of providing information to my neighbors (and others in our general community) on these safer methods, I was unable to convince one neighbor to terminate service. I was able to convince the other neighbor, but for the duration of their existing contract they were unable to notify me of when sprays would occur since they received little notice. This is precisely what HB1237 would correct.

We can provide information to neighbors about safer alternatives, but we cannot count on them to utilize these safer alternatives. Instead, we need the protections afforded by HB1237. I urge you, for the safety of vulnerable Marylanders and, in addition, to protect diversity of local species, to issue a favorable report on HB1237 and provide us a registry so we can be notified of when sprays will occur.

For these reasons, I urge this Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on HB1199.