

February 12, 2025

HB 386 Pesticide Registration – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibitions

Health and Government Operations Committee

Testimony of Jason Davidson, Friends of the Earth

In Support

Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Friends of the Earth and its more than 30,000 members and supporters in Maryland, I urge the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 386.

HB 386 would prohibit the sale of any pesticides containing PFAS active ingredients by 2028, with an initial restriction by 2026. There are a number of effective alternatives for all pesticide uses containing PFAS.

Exposure to PFAS is linked to cancer and other long-term health impacts. [Scientists](#) have found PFAS in mosquito control products and common pesticides used in agriculture. A recent study found PFAS contaminated corn, bean and peanut crops grown in fields that were sprayed with 6 commonly used pesticides that had tested in the millions of parts per trillion levels of PFAS. Of great concern is that this study, which confirmed other studies, found PFAS contaminates the crops themselves, increasing human and animal exposure through consumption of the contaminated food. This continues even after spraying is stopped because of the persistence of PFAS contamination in the soil.

In response to concerns regarding PFAS in pesticides, EPA banned 12 PFAS chemicals for use as inert ingredients in pesticides late last year. However, EPA is not currently requiring ongoing testing of pesticides for unintentional contamination.

PFAS are commonly referred to as “forever chemicals,” due to their inability to break down in the environment. **Inadvertent spraying of these chemicals** through broad mosquito control applications and agricultural use **poses a significant risk to residents, our food supply, as well as local waterways and turf, due to drift.**

PFAS disrupts the human endocrine system. A January 2022 [study](#) in Annual Reviews found that children are particularly vulnerable to endocrine disruption, and that **there are essentially no safe levels of exposure for them.** Earlier studies have produced [similar findings](#).

Protections are necessary at the state level especially under the current federal administration. EPA has failed to meaningfully protect people from PFAS exposure through pesticides. While the Biden administration took preliminary steps, there is tremendous uncertainty surrounding EPA regulatory protections for the foreseeable future. EPA actions were insufficient under the Biden administration; they will likely be non-existent for the next four years.

The last time Maryland was faced with a lack of federal leadership on a chemical deeply problematic for public health, the legislature became one of just a few states to ban chlorpyrifos. Marylanders can't wait four more years for a chance to be protected from toxic PFAS forever pesticides.

PFAS also has significant harmful impacts on wildlife, including honeybees. Meta-analyses have found adverse affects across several species and geographies and have found that PFAS can bioaccumulate at a global scale. Research shows potential adverse affects in species ranging from fish, to birds, to mammals, to honeybees. PFAS has even been found in the honey of bees exposed to the forever chemicals.

Due to these substantial risks, Friends of the Earth strongly urges a favorable report on HB 386

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