



## CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL

### Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council

Thursday, December 19, 2024  
9:30am – 11:00am

#### **MINUTES**

##### Members:

Subha Chandar (Chair)  
Alexander Lehmann  
Alicia Mezu  
Camille Burke  
Laura Allen  
Lisa Horne  
Megan Latshaw  
Moses Valle-Palacios  
Nsedu Witherspoon  
Paul Ferraro  
Kylan Simpson (staff)

##### Guests:

Allison O'Brien  
Christopher McGrath  
Kelly Love  
Michael Ichniowski  
MJ Coolen  
Ruth Berlin  
Sean Lynch  
Theodora Scarato  
Veronika Carella

#### **Meeting Notes**

##### **Welcome**

- Subha Chandar called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM.
- Quorum was not initially met. Once quorum was achieved, meeting minutes from the previous session could be approved.

##### **Old Business**

##### **Approval of November 19, 2024 Joint Meeting Minutes**

- **Discussion:**
  - Subha confirmed that meeting minutes from the joint CEJSC meeting were shared. Awaiting CEJSC's review to ensure consistency between groups.
  - Kylan Simpson mentioned awaiting response from Noble (CEJSC) for joint approval.

- Camille Burke (CEJSC Chair) will follow up with Noble on pending tasks.
- Subha initiated a motion to approve the minutes from November 19, 2024.
  - Motion Seconded by: Camille Burke
  - Vote: Approved with five yays, including one from Alicia Mezu (via chat). No objections or abstentions.

### **Response from MDA Regarding Letter to Sec. Atticks**

- Summary of Request:
  - CEHPAC had requested MDA to collect pesticide application records from Maryland schools and make them publicly accessible, emphasizing the need for searchable databases.
  - The response from MDA highlighted regulatory limits, capacity issues, and areas where MDA could collaborate with MSDE and schools.
- Discussion:
  - Subha summarized MDA's response, including references to statutes, regulations, and resource constraints.
  - Alexander Lehmann (MDA) confirmed that MDA's actions align with the statutes but welcomed further dialogue.
  - Nsedu Obot Witherspoon raised concerns about the claim of no pesticide-related child harm in 20 years and urged a more comprehensive review of exposure cases. Nse expressed skepticism about MDA's statement that no children have been harmed by pesticide exposure in Maryland schools over the past 20 years. She emphasized that this claim seemed overly broad and likely underestimated cases of exposure or harm that may not have been reported or documented. Highlighted the importance of reviewing available data from public health agencies and school districts to verify MDA's claim. She suggested that the lack of reported cases could be due to insufficient reporting mechanisms or gaps in tracking and awareness among parents and schools. Stressed the need for CEHPAC to move beyond debate and focus on actionable strategies to protect children's environmental health. Suggested aligning efforts with broader school health initiatives, such as addressing indoor air quality and exposure to other environmental hazards. Urged CEHPAC to consider advocating for additional resources to improve record-keeping and reporting systems related to pesticide applications. She also emphasized the need for collaboration between CEHPAC, MDA, and schools to ensure alignment on goals and priorities. Proposed focusing CEHPAC's collective strength on identifying and tackling the most pressing environmental health issues affecting children. She highlighted the importance of leveraging the expertise of council members to address systemic challenges in protecting children from harmful exposures in schools.
  - Megan Weil Latshaw stated that CEHPAC's primary request for comprehensive application records was not fully addressed. Suggested advising the legislature for additional resources.
  - Paul Ferraro proposed automating annual data requests to prevent data loss due to statutory two-year retention limits.
  - Kelly Love (MDA-Public) clarified inspection processes and record formats at schools. Shared that 16,000 pesticide applicators operate statewide, with records often kept in varied formats. Kelly explained that MDA conducts annual inspections of schools, reviewing records to ensure compliance with IPM protocols. However, MDA does not retain these records but verifies their presence and completeness during inspections. Mentioned that pesticide applicators in Maryland number approximately 16,000, with record-keeping practices varying widely. Some use electronic systems, while others maintain paper records, complicating centralized data collection. Noted that most violations identified during inspections are corrected on-site, except for structural issues requiring more extensive interventions. Stated that MDA submits activity summaries to the EPA but does not maintain detailed records in a publicly accessible format due to resource constraints.

- Veronika Carella (Public) emphasized the importance of accessing applicator records to analyze the effectiveness of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Veronika emphasized that MDA should leverage its statutory authority to directly request pesticide application records from certified applicators, rather than relying on schools or other entities. This would streamline data collection and provide actionable insights into Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices. Highlighted that without access to these records, it is impossible to assess the effectiveness of IPM or identify the circumstances under which chemical pesticides are used. Shared a personal story about her child's severe reaction to pesticide exposure in a Maryland school, underscoring the need for robust record-keeping and oversight. Indicated that she regularly receives complaints from parents and PTAs about pesticide applications, suggesting an ongoing issue that requires greater attention.
- Alicia Mezu (MSDE): Noted that some schools maintain electronic records, which could facilitate data sharing in the future.
- Proposed Actions:
  - Advocate for legislative support to enhance MDA's capacity to create a searchable database of pesticide application records.
  - Explore collaboration with MSDE and local schools to improve data accessibility.
  - Investigate the feasibility of requesting pesticide records directly from applicators under existing statutes.

## **New Business**

### **Legislative Session Presentation by Christopher McGrath (MDH)**

- Presenter: Christopher McGrath, Health Policy Analyst, MDH
- Overview:
  - Christopher provided an overview of the legislative process and key roles CEHPAC can play in influencing bills related to children's environmental health.
  - Explained legislative timelines, including key dates for bill introductions, hearings, and votes.
  - Presented an example of a bill's structure, including how to interpret amendments, fiscal notes, and effective dates.
  - Emphasized the importance of submitting timely testimony during committee hearings, as decisions are often made shortly afterward.
- Key Points Discussed:
  - Explained the differences between written and oral testimony, recommending that CEHPAC submit written testimony with supplemental oral testimony for maximum impact.
  - Suggested options for CEHPAC to handle legislative matters, including forming a standing committee or being on-call during the session.
  - Questions from Members:
    - Megan asked about the "health note" concept, which McGrath clarified is typically handled by agencies like MDH rather than advisory councils.
  - Action Items:
    - Determine a process for rapid response during legislative sessions.
    - Follow up on relevant bills once pre-filed.

### **PFAS Presentation by Dr. Michael Ichniowski**

- Presenter: Dr. Michael Ichniowski, Chair, Environmental Health and Climate Change Committee, Maryland AAP
- Key Points:

- PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are synthetic chemicals resistant to environmental degradation, often found in pesticides, firefighting foams, and food packaging. PFAS accumulate in human and animal bodies and persist in soil and water.
- Detailed toxic effects observed in animal studies and human cell cultures, including immunotoxicity, endocrine disruption, carcinogenicity, neurotoxicity, and kidney and liver damage.
- PFAS exposure occurs via ingestion, inhalation, and skin contact. They also transfer through the placenta and breast milk, posing risks to fetuses and infants.
- Legislative Proposal: Advocated for a phased elimination of PFAS-containing pesticides in Maryland, emphasizing:
  - Preventing soil and water contamination.
  - Reducing exposure risks for children and other vulnerable populations.
  - Supporting environmental cleanup efforts by minimizing PFAS sources.
- Highlighted contamination incidents in Cecil County and Harford County schools.
- Questions and Comments:
  - Megan inquired about the bill's current status and whether text from the prior year's version was available.
  - Dr. Ichniowski plans to submit updated testimony and share the 2023 bill text.
  - Ruth Berlin (Public) noted minor revisions to the upcoming bill, maintaining its core goal of a phased PFAS pesticide ban.
- Next Steps:
  - Share presentation slides, past testimony, and updated bill language with CEHPAC members.
  - Engage with legislative sponsors to support advocacy efforts.

### **Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- January 2025: Potential MDE Presentation Webinar and/or CEHPAC Meeting

### **Public Comment**

- No public comments were made. Public comments provided through email.

### **Adjourn**

- Subha Chandar adjourned the meeting at 11:05 AM.

\*\*\*Presentation slides attached.

\*\*\*Public input attached.

## PRESENTATION



# 2025 Legislative Training for Councils

Prevention and Health Promotion Administration

Office of Support Services

December 2024

## Who is this?

Chris McGrath, Health Policy Analyst  
Office of Support Services (OSS)

OSS supports the Environmental Health Bureau (along with the other Bureaus, Centers, Offices, and Programs) on legislative reports, regulation development, and Legislative Session.



# Training Objectives

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- Overview of session
- How to read a bill
- Reviewing bills and taking a position
- Updates to hearing procedures, 2025 session

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## *OVERVIEW OF SESSION*

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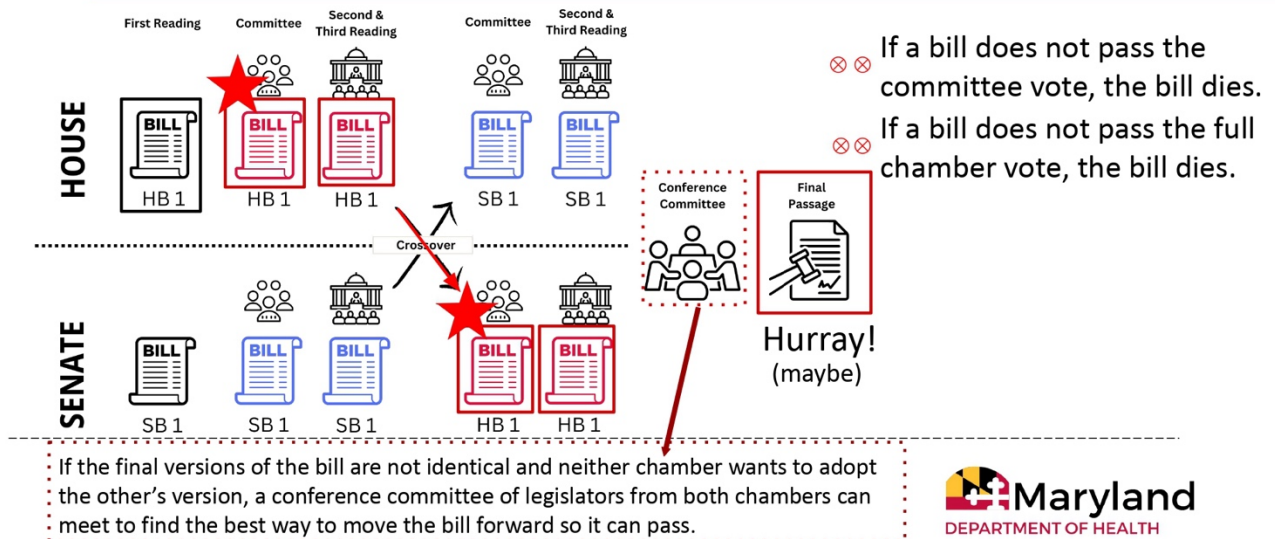
# What is Legislative Session?

Every year, the Maryland General Assembly (also called “the Legislature”) comes together from mid-January through mid-April to make, change, and remove laws. The short timeline means a fast pace.

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## How a bill becomes law



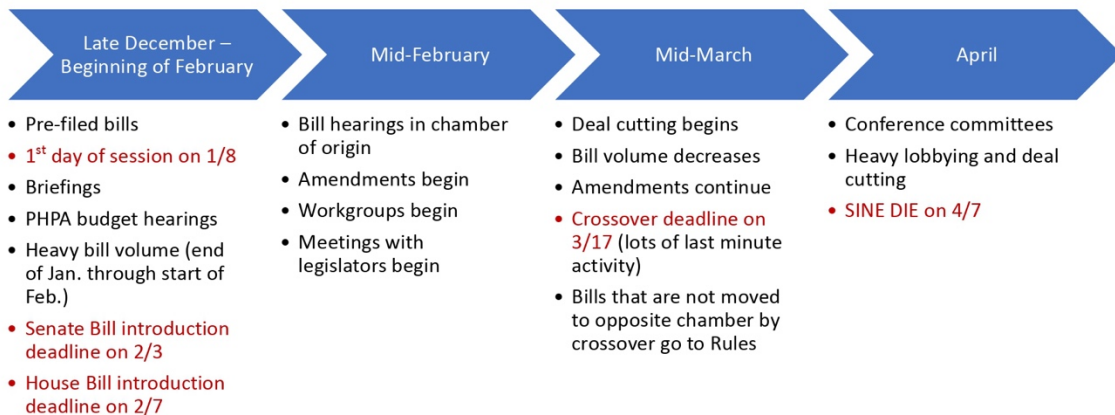
## Key acronyms for Legislative Session

CF	Crossfile
LOI	Letter of Information
LOC	Letter of Concern
LOS	Letter of Support
MGA	Maryland General Assembly
OSS	PHPA Office of Support Services
PHPA	Prevention and Health Promotion Administration
PHS	Public Health Services
OGA	Office of Governmental Affairs (MDH)

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## Legislative Session Timeline



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## HOW TO READ A BILL

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## Anatomy of a Bill

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**First Reader Bill** – the bill as printed for the first time with its assigned bill number

**Third Reader Bill** – the bill that is printed after the second reading in the chamber of origin, including adopted amendments

### Both first and third readers have these elements

- Chamber and bill number
- Purpose paragraph
- Affected statutes
- Section I – changes to text
- Section II(+) – Effective date, reporting requirements
- Line numbers

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# What changed?

## Initial Changes:

- [Text in Bold Brackets]: Indicates matter deleted from existing law
- **BOLD TEXT IN SMALL CAPS**: Indicates matter added to existing law

## Amendments:

- Underlining: Indicates amendments to the bill in original chamber.
- ~~Strikeout~~: Indicates matter either stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.
- *Italics*: Indicates opposite chamber or conference committee amendments.
- Enrolled copies of legislation are printed with matter added by the opposite house or by a conference committee shown in italics and underlined.

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### Chamber and Bill # HOUSE BILL 522

J1  
HB 1194/16 – HGO  
By: Delegates Barron, Cullison, Pena-Melnyk, and Rosenberg  
Introduced and read first time: January 27, 2017  
Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

7lr2680  
CF 7lr2375

#### A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 Food Service Facilities – Automated External Defibrillator Program  
(The Joe Sheya Act)

#### Purpose Paragraph

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the owner and operator of a certain food service facility to  
5 develop and, beginning on a certain date, implement an automated external  
6 defibrillator program that meets certain requirements; requiring the Department of  
7 Health and Mental Hygiene and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical  
8 Services Systems jointly to adopt certain regulations; and generally relating to an  
9 automated external defibrillator program for food service facilities.

#### Affected Statutes

10 BY adding to  
11 Article – Health – General  
12 Section 21–330.3  
13 Annotated Code of Maryland  
14 (2015 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

#### Section 1

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 Article – Health – General

18 21–330.3.

19 (A) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A FOOD SERVICE FACILITY THAT  
20 HAS:  
21 (1) AN ANNUAL GROSS INCOME OF \$400,000 OR LESS; OR  
22 (2) A SEATING CAPACITY OF LESS THAN 50.

## Example – HB 522 (2017)

- First Reader Bill on this slide
- Third Reader Bill on next slide

2 HOUSE BILL 522

1 (B) THE OWNER AND OPERATOR OF A FOOD SERVICE FACILITY SHALL  
2 DEVELOP AND, BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2018, IMPLEMENT AN AUTOMATED  
3 EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR PROGRAM THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF §  
4 13–517 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE.

5 (C) THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE AND THE  
6 MARYLAND INSTITUTE FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEMS JOINTLY  
7 SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS THAT:

8 (1) ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR PERIODIC INSPECTIONS AND  
9 ANNUAL MAINTENANCE OF THE AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS; AND

10 (2) ASSIST THE OWNER AND OPERATOR OF A FOOD SERVICE FACILITY  
11 IN CARRYING OUT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION.

#### Section 2

12 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
13 October 1, 2017.

Matter added to existing law. Nothing deleted in this First  
Reader, but if it were, it would be shown [in brackets].

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# The “cheatsheet” that’s not cheating at all

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Every bill has a reference (or “cheatsheet”) of what text modifiers match each type of amendment. It’s always on the bottom of the first page, and includes all text modifiers used in the bill.

21 Department of the Environment, ~~to contract~~ in consultation with ~~the Department of~~  
22 Legislative Services and the University of Maryland Agriculture and Food Systems  
23 Extension Program, to conduct a certain study; and generally relating to studying  
24 environmental health specialists and well and septic systems permitting.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike-out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



## ROLES DURING SESSION

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# How it Works: Role of OSS

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## For PHPA

- Liaison between PHPA and OGA/members of General Assembly
- Track and distribute relevant bills and keeps staff updated on bill status
- Last year PHPA tracked **over 500** bills and reviewed many hundreds more

## For Councils:

- OSS distributes bills to PHPA programs
- PHPA programs are responsible for reaching out to their councils to notify them of relevant bills
- **Work with your MDH council staff to determine a system that works for your Council**

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## *REVIEWING BILLS AND TAKING A POSITION*

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## Taking a Position: What's That?

Presents the **Council's** views on a proposed bill in **writing *OR*** through writing **and in-person testimony**

Position	Translation
No Position	"We have nothing to say"
Letter of Information (LOI)	"We'd like you to know more"
Letter of Support (LOS)	"We're in favor"
Letter of Concern (LOC)	"We have some reservations"
Testimony	Translation
Support with testimony	"We'd like to present our support"
Support with Amendments (SWA)	"We'd like to present our suggestions"
Oppose	"We'd like to present our reservations"

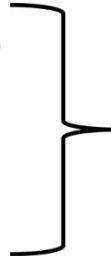
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## Taking positions: Role of Councils

### •Positions:

- Review distributed bills and determine if submitting a position
- Write/approve position papers
- Share positions with MDH prior to submission



All while remaining  
**OMA compliant!**

Agenda for vote posted publicly with **at least 24 hours notice**

**Voting procedures made available to public**

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## Recommendations for OMA compliance

**Option 1:** Notify council members that they should be on standby during session for last-minute meetings

- Potentially identify a quorum of council members willing to commit to schedule modifications to accommodate last minute meetings
- Work with MDH staff member responsible for publicly posting and announcing meetings to ensure a fast turnaround

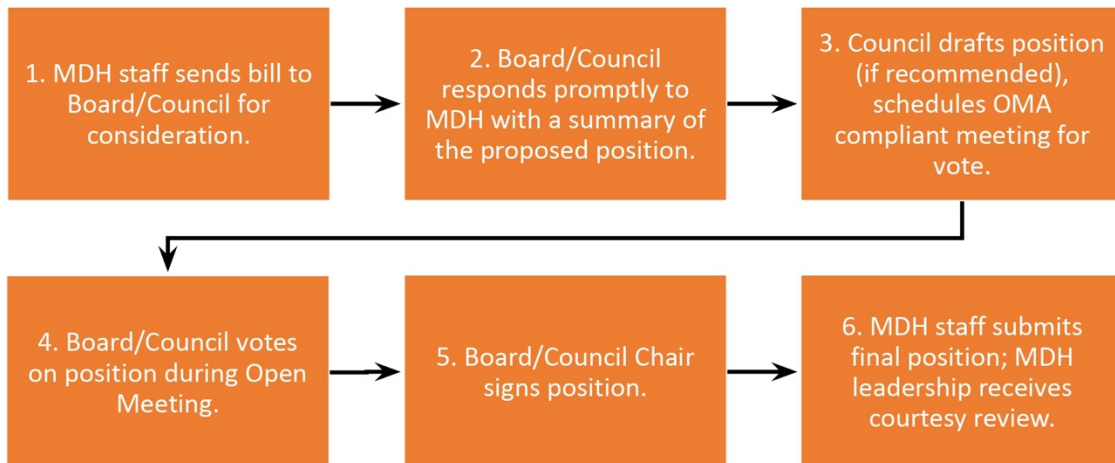
**Option 2:** Schedule standing, twice or thrice-weekly calls specifically for potential legislative action that may be posted publicly in advance

- When the bill of interest is released, the MDH staff member responsible for publicly posting and announcing meetings can add that information to the template agenda

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## Typical Council Process for Taking a Position



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## Giving in-person testimony

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- Person giving the testimony on behalf of a Council is often the Chair, but does not have to be.
- Oral testimony should be accompanied by written testimony
  - They should not mirror each other—save good stuff for each!
- If the Deputy Secretary/Secretary is also giving in-person testimony, they may want to coordinate talking points.

Any member may also give individual written/oral testimony independently. The member *may* identify themselves as a Council member, but must immediately be clear they are representing only themselves, and *not* representing the Council.



# PFAS PESTICIDES

Michael Ichniowski, MD

## PFAS Definitions

Perfluoro/polyfluoro alkyl substances (PFAS) are:

“Fluorinated substances that contain at least one fully fluorinated methyl or methylene carbon atom (without any H/Cl/Br/I atom attached to it).” Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, an international organization promoting economic growth and sustainable development-includes USA)

“A class of fluorinated organic chemicals that contain at least one fully fluorinated carbon atom, including perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances.” PFAS Chemicals-Prohibitions and Requirements, passed by MGA and signed into law in 2022.



## PFAS Characteristics

- Man-made compounds not present in nature
- Extremely strong carbon-fluorine bonds that do not break down in the environment
- Slow excretion with bioaccumulation in the circulation of animals and humans
- Taken up by plants and produce grown in contaminated soil
- Primary routes of human absorption are ingestion (contaminated food and water) and inhalation (sprayed PFAS products or contaminated dust/soil). Direct contact with skin may also be a route.
- Cross placenta and present in breast milk as sources of fetal and infant exposure

## PFAS in Pesticides

- Active ingredient may have one or more fully fluorinated carbon, usually one or more perfluorinated methyl groups ( $\text{CF}_3$ ), which meets both definitions discussed previously
- PFAS may be included among inert ingredients, which are not disclosed on the product label
- PFAS may leach from containers in which pesticide is shipped or stored

Proposed bill “Pesticides-PFAS Chemicals-Prohibition” would only prohibit the first category.

# PFAS Pesticide Toxicity

Over 1000 of the 14,000 pesticides registered in Maryland contain one of 66 different identified PFAS as their active ingredient

Toxicities identified in human cell line or animal (rodent or fish) studies include:

- Teratogenicity (Bifenthrin, Fipronil, Fludioxinil, Fluvalinate, Oxyfluorfen, Trifluralin)
- Immunotoxicity (Bifenthrin, Fipronil, Flonicamide)
- Endocrine disruption (Fludioxinil, Fluvalinate, Fipronil)
- Carcinogenicity (Trifluralin, Fluopyram)
- Kidney/liver toxicity (Fluazifop-*p*-butyl)
- Neurotoxicity (Bifenthrin, Bromethalin)

Alexandrino, D&M, et al;2021. Revisiting pesticide pollution: The case of fluorinated pesticides. Environmental Pollution. 292, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2021.118315>

## Rationale for banning PFAS pesticides

- Decrease amount of PFAS added to the environment
- Decrease water and soil contamination through direct application/runoff/airborne spread
- Decrease food exposures from agricultural use
- Decrease neighborhood exposures from mosquito and other pest spraying
- Decrease indoor exposures-these pesticides are used in schools, hospitals and health care facilities
- Decrease children's exposures to toxicity that may have life-long effects
- Decrease individual body burden of PFAS in most individuals

## PUBLIC INPUT

Good afternoon Subha and Kylan,

Please consider my comments during today's meeting and yesterday's email (*included below*) as MD CEHC's Public Input for the December 19, 2024 CEHPAC meeting, since there was no time for "public input" today.

MD CEHC looks forward working with CEHPAC and MDA to close the DATA GAP on ensuring transparency in accessing pesticide application records. We still do not have any records for either of the complaints filed with MDA for the June 8, 2024 North East Elementary Schools (Cecil County) or this weekend's space spraying at Lake Elkhorn Middle School (Howard County) using an EPA registered disinfectant in a "fogger".

You cannot measure what you do not monitor. Neither MDA or CEHPAC knows how effective the **1997 IPM in Schools Law** is in reducing children's exposure to pesticides because MDA does not monitor or collect pesticide use data. **CEHPAC has the power to facilitate transparency and ensure that children are fully protected under Maryland law.**

Respectfully,

...Veronika

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Veronika Carella - MD CEHC Legislative Director  
Maryland Children's Environmental Health Coalition  
P.O. Box 97  
Glenwood, Maryland 21738

On 2024-12-18 13:27, Veronika Carella - MD CEHC Legislative Director wrote:

Subha,

As MD CEHC might only be allowed to speak during the "*public input*" at the end of tomorrow's meeting, we wanted to share with you and the members of the original **CEHPAC IAQ and Schools Working Group** our concerns and observations regarding MDA's October 1, 2024 Response to CEHPAC's August 19, 2024 **Data Gap Motion** Letter. We trust this will help to inform CEHPAC's discussion.

**The MDA response to CEHPAC did not address the two requests made by CEHPAC.** At tomorrow's meeting, we respectfully ask that CEHPAC reiterate to MDA those two requests. While acknowledging that MDA does not have the funds to create a publicly accessible data base of application records at this time, MDA is the only entity regulated to request the application records from certified pesticide applicators.

**Per the CEHPAC Motion, please ask MDA tomorrow to request the application records (for the past 2 years) from ALL MDA-certified pesticide applicators for any pesticide application made to any school on any day of the year.**

**RATIONAL for REQUEST:**

This request intentionally goes beyond the scope of the **1997 IPM in Schools Law**, as it is intended to capture ALL pesticide applications to ALL schools on ALL days of the year. This would require one letter from MDA to all certified pesticide applicators in the state specifying a unique MDA email address to send the **2 years of records** to.

Please then again ask MDA to forward to or "cc" a unique CEHPAC email address to receive the records - for review by CEHPAC. Prior meetings have discussed the "**need to address effectiveness reviews for current IPM practices in schools**" (Oct. 21, 2024 Minutes). The June 25, 2024 Minutes acknowledged "**the difficulty in developing databases**" and "**highlighted the governor's emphasis on transparency.**"

Neither MDA or CEHPAC knows how effective the **1997 IPM in Schools Law** is in reducing children's exposure to pesticides because MDA does not monitor or collect pesticide use data. As stated in CEHPAC's Letter, "*MDA taking possession of this information will close an existing data gap and ensure transparency when pesticides are used in places that children occupy. Additionally, this will facilitate actions addressed in MDA Regulations, county-board-of-education-mandated IPM Policy requirements, and county-level IPM Plans.*"

**CEHPAC REQUEST:** Per the June 25, 2024 CEHPAC DATA GAP Motion (refer to minutes at url: <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/EH/Documents/CEHPAC/CEHPAC-Minutes-06.25.2024.pdf> ), CEHPAC made two requests:

1) "*CEHPAC asks that MDA request the complete application records for any application of an EPA Registered Pesticide to a Maryland School (public or private) at any time during or beyond the academic year.*"

2) "*we request that MDA promptly implement a public and open data system for school-based reporting of EPA-registered pesticides so as to document and make available:*

- a. any and all pesticides applied to public or private schools*
- b. pesticides applied during and beyond the academic year*
- a. EPA-registered pesticide used for disinfecting protocols" (this would include disinfectants used for space spraying or fogging)*

## **CONCERNS:**

As stated in CEHPAC's Letter, "*MDA regulations require that applicators record specific data whenever EPA-registered pesticides are applied by an MDA certified applicator and provide the data to MDA upon request (MDA Reg 15.05.01.12 Records). The issue is that MDA does not currently request the data. **CEHPAC asks that MDA request all pesticide application records as MDA is the only entity allowed by statute to collect pesticide application records, thus making this information available for review and analysis by CEHPAC...***"

## **URLs for the DATA GAP Letters:**

CEHPAC to

MDA: <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/EH/Documents/CEHPAC/CEHPAC%20LETTER%20-%20MDA%20Pesticide%20use%20in%20Schools%20MOTION%20240625%20Meeting%20Aug%202024%20signed.pdf>

MDA response to

CEHPAC: <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/EH/Documents/CEHPAC/Response%20to%20CEHPAC%20Letter.pdf>

Please share this information as you see fit. Your consideration of this request is much appreciated. We look forward to tomorrow's meeting and to a time when Maryland children are fully protected under this 1997 IPM in Schools Law.

Still Advocating for Every Child,

...Veronika

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*Veronika Carella - MD CEHC Legislative Director  
Maryland Children's Environmental Health Coalition  
P.O. Box 97  
Glenwood, Maryland 21738*

## PUBLIC INPUT

Hi Kylan and Subha,

I wanted to share as public input for the meeting we had today the following:

On Tuesday, the below petition was sent to MDA - the link for the petition and press release are at the bottom of the email.

----- START PUBLIC INPUT -----

From: **Bonnie Raindrop** <[bonnieraindrop@gmail.com](mailto:bonnieraindrop@gmail.com)>

Date: Tue, Dec 17, 2024 at 2:49 PM

Subject: MDA receives our petition for Comprehensive Pesticide Data Program in Maryland

Today, the Maryland Pesticide Education Network (MPEN), in partnership with Earthjustice and a broad coalition of farmers, scientists, public health experts, businesses, and advocates petitioned the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to comply with state law by creating a comprehensive pesticide data program to increase transparency around pesticide use.

The petition (linked below) is the fruition of more than two years of work by Earthjustice lawyers. MPEN is tremendously grateful to the Earthjustice team for their skillfully documented petition and their guidance in formally bringing this matter before the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). We also thank the 49 petitioners who signed on in support of this effort. The petition requires a response from MDA within 60 days.

### **Fifty Experts and Advocates Urge Maryland to Develop a Comprehensive Pesticide Data Program for Public Health and Transparency**

*Pesticide transparency enables researchers, health professionals, and others to tackle harm to humans, wildlife, and the environment*

The petition urges MDA to create a comprehensive pesticide data program requiring farmers who apply restricted use pesticides, public agencies, pest control businesses, and sellers and distributors of restricted-use pesticides to submit their pesticide records to MDA annually. The program would require MDA to make data—including the date, zip code, and amount of each pesticide application and sale—publicly available, while protecting the anonymity of recordkeepers.

Adopting the requested program would bring MDA into compliance with Maryland law, which has required MDA to develop a comprehensive pesticide data program since 1989. A 2014 law provided funding for MDA to collect, analyze, and report pesticide use data. Nonetheless, the agency has failed

to create the required program. MDA's current data collection efforts lack the detail, scope, and up-to-date information necessary to provide comprehensive pesticide data.

"Easily accessible and up-to-date information about pesticide use would help our public health and medical professionals trace and treat pesticide exposure, allow scientists to better study the effects of pesticide use, enable legislators to evaluate the risks of pesticides, and aid farmers and other applicators in improving the efficacy and safety of their pest management," said **Ruth Berlin, executive director of the Maryland Pesticide Education Network**. "Collecting this data, while crucial to the health of all, is especially important in light of the threats pesticides pose to our most vulnerable populations, including developing fetuses, newborns, and children, as well as elderly people, people challenged with serious health complications, and people living in overburdened communities," she said.

Pesticides cause serious harm to public health, wildlife, and the environment. In humans, pesticide exposure is associated with [acute symptoms](#) such as nausea, vomiting, and headaches, as well as [chronic and life-threatening conditions](#), including cancer and reproductive, respiratory, neurological, and developmental disorders. Numerous [studies show](#) that pesticide exposure disproportionately burdens communities of color and low-income communities. Pesticides can also harm beneficial insects, aquatic life, birds, and other wildlife and can contaminate soil and waterways.

Pesticide data is critical to addressing these far-reaching harms, including the alarming decline of honeybee populations. In Maryland alone, honeybee populations have experienced an annual loss of about 50 percent—a devastating blow considering honeybees' role in pollinating crops that contribute to more than half of the United States' \$29 billion annual agriculture industry. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, more information about pesticide application and pollinators' exposure is key to reversing these trends. Comprehensive pesticide data would also help farmers tackle pesticide-related issues like pest and weed resistance, ensuring safer and more effective pest management.

"The requested program would help Marylanders identify and address harms from pesticides and position Maryland as a leader in pesticide data transparency," said **Earthjustice attorney Kara Goad**. "MDA has the tools it needs to collect comprehensive pesticide data, and it is past time for it to do so."

Maryland law gives MDA 60 days to decide whether to grant or deny the petition.

The 50 petitioners are: A.I.R. Lawncare & Landscaping Services; Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments; American Bird Conservancy; Laura Anderko, PhD, RN; Assateague Coastal Trust; Audubon Mid-Atlantic; Bee Friendly Apiary; Beyond Pesticides; Linda S. Birnbaum, PhD; Butterbee Farm; CATA – The Farmworkers Support Committee; Caitlin Ceryes, PhD, MPH, RN; Charm City Meadworks; Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility; Clean Water Action; Cottingham Farm LLC; Earthjustice; Environmental Working Group; The Farm at Our House; Farmworker Justice; Forested; Friends of the Earth; Friends of the Nanticoke River; GreenLatinos; Heathcote Community; Michael Ichniowski, MD; Karen Knee, PhD; Philip J. Landrigan, MD, MSc, FAAP; Latino Farmers & Ranchers International, Inc.; Magothy River Association; Maryland Conservation Council; Maryland Ornithological Society; Maryland Pesticide Education Network; Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.; Mason Farms Produce LLC; Migrant Clinicians Network; Montgomery Countryside Alliance; Moon Valley Farm; Next Step Produce; Potomac Riverkeeper Network; Provident Farm; Queen Anne's Conservation Association; Rachel Carson Council; Christopher Rowe, PhD; Ana M. Rule, PhD; Susan Schreier, PhD; Brian S. Schwartz, MD, MS; Waterkeepers Chesapeake; Wicomico Environmental Trust; and Benjamin Zaitchik, PhD.



[Read the Petition to Develop a Comprehensive Pesticide Data Program under the Maryland Agricultural Code here](#)

[Our press release is posted here.](#)

-----END PUBLIC INPUT-----

Sean Lynch

Project Director

Maryland Pesticide Education Network