February 13, 2019

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Bill: HB 275: Pesticide – Use of Chlorpyrifos – Prohibition
Position: Favorable

Chesapeake PSR urges the House Environment and Transportation Committee to pass a favorable report on HB 275. HB 275 would prohibit the use of the pesticide chlorpyrifos in Maryland.

Chlorpyrifos is a neurotoxic pesticide used in U.S. agriculture to kill a variety of agricultural pests. There are many widely available alternative methods and products to chlorpyrifos that control pests in agriculture today.

Chesapeake PSR supports HB 275 because the scientific evidence lending support to a ban on chlorpyrifos is overwhelming. The clear weight of the evidence confirms that chlorpyrifos is toxic to developing brains of fetus, infants and young children, and the developmental damage caused by chlorpyrifos to children is irreversible.

Chesapeake PSR would like to highlight a few conclusions that U.S. EPA and other scientists have drawn from 20 years of toxicology and human epidemiology evidence regarding the safety of chlorpyrifos:

- There is no detectable level of chlorpyrifos for dietary exposure that can be considered safe;
- There is no safe level of chlorpyrifos in drinking water;
- Exposure to chlorpyrifos is linked to autism, ADHD, lower IQ scores, and other neurodevelopmental issues in children;
- Children have a high risk of exposure in utero or during critical periods of growth to this toxic pesticide; and,
- Pesticide drift continues at unsafe levels 300 feet from the field’s edge.

In 2015, because of these risks, U.S. EPA scientists recommended that the United States ban all uses of this pesticide. However, in an unprecedented move, Scott Pruitt, U.S. EPA’s new Administrator under the Trump Administration, overruled the recommendations of U.S. EPA’s scientific advisors and reversed the agency’s decision to ban this toxic pesticide.

In August 2018, a federal appeals court ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to bar within 60 days chlorpyrifos, but U.S. EPA has appealed the ruling. There will be a full court rehearing in March 2019. If the new ruling is consistent with the original ruling, EPA is likely to submit a request for an appeal to the Supreme Court.

With its actions, the U.S. EPA has put politics above science and the economic interests of several large companies above the health and well being of the children of the United States. When the federal government fails to perform its most basic function of protecting the health of our children in a fair and impartial way, it is appropriate and necessary for the states to step in and provide these basic protections.