

For Immediate Release

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**Survey Shows Marylanders are Very Concerned about
Pesticide Risks, Support Legislative Action**

*Scientists, Public Health and Environmental Advocates, Beekeepers to Testify Today in
Favor of HB 621 to Establish Dedicated Funding for Pesticide Reporting Database*

(Annapolis, MD) – Marylanders are very concerned about the health and environmental risks posed by pesticides, and the majority overwhelmingly supports increasing the annual product registration fee to establish a pesticide reporting database, according to a new poll.

The Smart on Pesticides Coalition released the survey results ahead of an Environmental Matters Committee hearing this afternoon on House Bill 621. The legislation would establish a dedicated fund for a pesticide reporting database through a \$10 increase on the annual product registration fee paid by pesticide chemical manufacturers. Advocates say this would be a significant first step toward a comprehensive reporting pesticide use database.

According to the January 2014 Opinion Works survey:

- More than **three-quarters (78 percent)** of Maryland voters are concerned about “the risk that pesticides pose to your own and your family’s health.” More than **four voters in ten (42 percent)** are very concerned.
- Voter **concern rises to 90 percent** when voters hear about health risks such as asthma, autism, and cancer, as well birth defects and fertility problems; and environmental risks to Maryland’s rivers and the Bay, as well as bee hive deaths.
- Making pesticide reporting mandatory is overwhelmingly supported by **79 percent of Maryland voters** and opposed by only 14 percent.
- Charging chemical manufacturers a higher product registration fee comparable with surrounding states to cover the costs of a pesticide reporting database is supported by **74 percent of voters**, with only 20 percent opposed.



[Md. survey infographic available online](#)

Delegate Stephen Lafferty, the sponsor of the House legislation said: “Voters have profound concern about the health and environmental risks posed by pesticides. They overwhelmingly support better pesticide use reporting. The Maryland Pesticide Reporting and Information Workgroup, which Senator Manno and I co-chair, recommends this modest fee increase on pesticide products so we can get the critical information we need to better protect our families, our waterways and our wildlife.”

Scientists say that professional pesticide applicators, including farmers and lawn care companies, need to make their pesticide use information available to public health and environmental researchers. This will help researchers determine if and when pesticides are affecting public health, waterways and wildlife.

Public health and environmental advocates, nurses, farmworkers, beekeepers, scientists and other experts plan to testify today in favor of the legislation.

Sarah Jones, from The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, said: "Protecting the millions of residents who receive water from the Potomac River Valley starts with information on pesticide use and exposure. However, in Maryland, information about professional use of pesticides is not available to government agencies or researchers. A pesticide use reporting system would be a bedrock to the collection of worthwhile and very beneficial information."

Virginia Ruiz, Director of Occupational and Environmental Health at Farmworker Justice, said "Pesticide exposure causes farmworkers to suffer more chemical-related injuries and illnesses than any other workforce in the nation. Data on pesticide use in Maryland is insufficient. With accurate information, we can prevent injury and illness and better protect the health of farmworkers, their families and the general public."

A growing body of research links pesticide exposure to asthma, autism, ADHD, cancer, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, birth defects, fertility problems and more. Pesticides are particularly dangerous for children. Pesticides also contaminate local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay and have been linked to intersex fish in the Potomac River.

Maryland beekeeper Roger Williams said, "While there are multiple factors in bee death, we beekeepers know firsthand that the application of pesticides is a potent factor. Yet needed research regarding on-the-ground impacts is stymied because we lack specific data to guide monitoring studies on what pesticides may be impacting hives in our region."

Pesticides also threaten wildlife, including honeybee populations. Last year, Maryland beekeepers reported losing nearly half of their beehives. While the cause is unknown, certain pesticides and fungicides have been linked to the problem.

HB 621 / SB 700 would generate revenue to collect, analyze and report pesticide use data through a modest \$10 increase on the annual registration fee paid by pesticide chemical manufacturers (like Dow, Monsanto, and Bayer). Out of 14 states surveyed, Maryland had the 2nd lowest registration fee at \$100/product. Based on a survey of product costs and registration fees, and the fact that products can be bought for uniform costs across the country, advocates say it would be practically impossible for pesticide manufacturers to pass costs onto consumers.

View an infographic about the pesticides survey at: <http://www.mdpestnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Pesticide-Polling-Infographic-2014-FINAL.pdf> . Read the full poll memo from OpinionWorks here: <http://www.mdpestnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Pesticide-Poll-Memo-2-10-14.pdf>.

Advocates are tweeting about the bill at #pesticidedata.

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The [Smart on Pesticides Maryland](#) – For Safe Water & Healthy Kids campaign is a coalition of concerned Maryland citizens and organizations working for better protections to keep our families, our waterways and our wildlife safe from pesticides, including the creating of a centralized, online pesticide use reporting database.

Assateague Coastal Trust Central Maryland Beekeepers, Chesapeake BaySavers, Clean Water Action, Farmworker Justice, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, Maryland Environmental Health Network, Maryland Hospitals for a Healthy Environment, Maryland League of Conservation Voters, Maryland League of Women Voters, Maryland Nurses Association, Maryland Organic Food and Farming Association, Maryland Pesticide Network, Maryland Public Interest Research Group, Sierra Club – Maryland Chapter, West/Rhode Riverkeeper