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Gov. O'Malley Signs Funding Bill for Pesticide Reporting

Advocates Cheer Legislation as First Step toward Scientifically Valid Pesticide Use Data Collection, Release New [Video](#) Highlighting the Need

(Annapolis, MD) - Governor Martin O'Malley today brought Maryland one step closer to having much-needed information about pesticide usage by signing House Bill 621 / Senate Bill 700 into law, which establishes funding for pesticide reporting. As advocates cheered the bill signing, they also released a new [video](#) about the need for scientifically valid pesticide reporting and vowed to continue their work.

"We are delighted to have the support of Governor O'Malley and Lt. Gov. Brown on this important issue," said Ruth Berlin, executive director of the Maryland Pesticide Network and head of a coalition that's been working to improve pesticide reporting for several years. "This legislation reflects widespread support for better pesticide usage reporting so we can protect public health, the Chesapeake Bay and wildlife - particularly our honeybees."

The bill generates revenue for a pesticide database through a modest increase on the annual product registration fee paid by pesticide manufacturers. Advocates say the legislation is a first step toward helping scientists and researchers understand the links between pesticide exposure and potential public health and environmental impacts.

"We are grateful to Senator Roger Manno and Delegate Stephen Lafferty, without whose leadership this bill would not have passed," Berlin added.

The new [video](#), released today by the Smart on Pesticides Maryland coalition, highlights Maryland's yet-to-be explained deaths of nearly half its honeybees last year. Certain pesticides and fungicides have been linked to the problem, but the cause remains elusive.

The video also explains why public health and environmental researchers need data about pesticide use so they can determine whether and how pesticides are affecting public health, waterways and wildlife.



Dr. Melissa Perry, Professor and Chair of the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at The George Washington University, is studying the impacts of pesticides on farmers in the Potomac River Valley and supported the legislation.

"A pesticide use reporting system will be a bedrock to the collection of worthwhile and very beneficial research information," said Dr. Perry. "Statistically valid and representative pesticide use data are critically needed for public health research such as ours."

A growing body of research links pesticide exposure to many health problems, including asthma, autism, ADHD, cancer, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, birth defects and fertility problems. Pesticides are particularly dangerous for children.

Farmworkers and their families, as well as urban low-income and minority communities, are disproportionately exposed to pesticides and therefore at higher risk.

Pesticides also contaminate local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay and have been linked to intersex fish in the Potomac River.

"Anyone who cares about children's health, clean water and wildlife should be excited that today we've moved one step closer to pesticide reporting," said Andrew Fellows of Clean Water Action. "But our work is not done. We need to make sure that the criteria for collecting pesticide data are scientifically valid and that reporting is done in a timely manner."

A January 2014 OpinionWorks [survey](#) showed Maryland voters have profound concern about the health and environmental risks posed by pesticides, and they overwhelmingly support better pesticide use reporting. More than three-quarters (78 percent) of Maryland voters polled said they were concerned about the risk pesticides pose to their family's health; 79 percent supported requiring farmers and lawn care companies to report their pesticide use.

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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.

Sign our [petition](#) to support scientifically valid pesticide reporting.

*Alliance of Nurses for a Healthy Environment - Anne Arundel Beekeepers Association
- Assateague Coastal Trust - Central Maryland Beekeepers - Chesapeake BaySavers
- Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility - Clean Water Action - Farmworker Justice - Interfaith
Partners of the Chesapeake - Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future - League of Women Voters of
Maryland - Maryland Bass Nation - Maryland Conservation Council - Maryland Environmental Health
Network - Maryland Healthy Food in Health Care, Project of Health Care Without Harm - Maryland
League of Conservation Voters - Maryland Nurses Association - Maryland Organic Food and Farming
Association - Maryland Pesticide Network - Maryland Public Health Association - Maryland Public
Interest Research Group - Maryland United for Peace and Justice - Montgomery Countryside Alliance -
Rachel Carson Council - Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter - Spa Creek Conservancy - West/Rhode
Riverkeeper - Wicomico Environmental Trust*