

For Immediate Release

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Scientists, Public Health and Environmental Advocates Again Testify In Support of Funding for Pesticide Reporting

*Senate EHEA Committee to Hear SB 700 Today; Survey Shows Marylanders are Very Concerned
about Pesticide Risks, Support Legislative Action*

(Annapolis, MD) – Scientists, researchers, and beekeepers will join public health and environmental advocates to testify before the Maryland Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs committee in favor of Senate bill 700 this afternoon. SB 700 / HB 621 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.

Last week, the Smart on Pesticides coalition released a [poll](#) showing that 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.

Senator Roger Manno, sponsor of the Senate legislation, said: “This summer, Delegate Lafferty and I co-chaired the Maryland Pesticide Reporting and Information Workgroup, which recommends this modest fee increase on pesticide products. Protecting public health and our environment is a huge priority for me, that’s why I’m sponsoring this legislation to help Maryland researchers get the critical information we need to better protect our families, our waterways and our wildlife.”

At last week’s House Environmental Matters committee hearing on HB 621, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) supported the legislation.

Andy Fellows of Clean Water Action said: “We’re very excited that the O’Malley Administration supports this bill, because we know the Governor is concerned about cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay and protecting the health of Maryland families and honeybees. This bill would help give MDA needed funding to establish a comprehensive pesticide use reporting database.”

According to the January 2014 Opinion Works [survey](#), voters have profound concern about the health and environmental risks posed by pesticides. They overwhelmingly support better pesticide use reporting.

- 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.



[Md. survey infographic available online](#)

- 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.

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.

Dr. Loren Garrettson, of the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said: "Substantial studies show an association between pesticide use and disease. I have absolutely no doubt in my mind that in the not-too-distant future we are going to see continued links between other pesticide use, both domestic and agricultural, and disease in childhood. That day is coming. We are going to have major decisions to make in the near future to protect our children."

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 Dixie Mullineaux said, "Maryland beekeepers are used to a 35 percent loss of their hives, but if the current trend of 50 percent loss continues to grow, in a few years, we will have *no* bees. We need information to guide monitoring studies on what pesticides may be impacting hives in our region."

Pesticides 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 Conservation Council, 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, Spa Creek Conservancy, West/Rhode Riverkeeper, Wicomico Environmental Trust