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## For Immediate Release

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## Maryland General Assembly Establishes Funding for Pesticide Reporting

*Advocates Say HB 621 / SB 700 is Step toward Scientifically Valid Pesticide Reporting*

(Annapolis, MD) – The Maryland General Assembly has given final passage to Senate Bill 700, legislation that generates revenue for professional pesticide usage reporting through a modest increase on the annual pesticide manufacturers' product registration fee. A final floor vote on the cross-filed House Bill 621 is expected soon.

Advocates say passing this legislation is a first step toward filling recognized data gaps about links between pesticide exposure and potential public health and environmental impacts. It is one of the few successful bills supported by the environmental community this year and the first legislation requiring action on pesticides to pass since 1999.

"Establishing dedicated funds for pesticide reporting in Maryland is a first step toward better protecting public health, the Chesapeake Bay and wildlife – including our very important honeybees," said Ruth Berlin, of the Maryland Pesticide Network. "We thank Senator Manno and Delegate Lafferty for their leadership and the O'Malley/Brown Administration for their support."

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 information will help researchers determine if and when 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 legislation.

"A pesticide use reporting system will be a bedrock to the collection of worthwhile and very beneficial 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 asthma, autism, ADHD, cancer, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, birth defects, fertility problems and more. 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.

In addition, 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.

“Anyone who cares about public 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.

“Our work is not done,” Fellows continued. “We need to make sure that the criteria for collecting pesticide data are scientifically valid and that reporting is done in a timely manner. Given the alarming rates of beehive deaths, the emergence of intersex fish and research showing links between pesticides and rising rates of cancer and autism, we don’t have time to waste.”

A January 2014 OpinionWorks [survey](#) showed that Maryland voters have profound concern about the health and environmental risks posed by pesticides and overwhelmingly support better pesticide use reporting.

- More than **three-quarters (78 percent) of Maryland voters** said they were concerned about “the risk that pesticides pose to your own and your family’s health.” More than **four voters in ten (42 percent)** were very concerned.
- Voter **concern rose to 90 percent** when voters heard about health risks such as asthma, autism, and cancer, as well birth defects and fertility problems; environmental risks to Maryland’s rivers and the Bay; as well as bee hive deaths.
- Making pesticide reporting mandatory was overwhelmingly supported by **79 percent of Maryland voters** and opposed by only 14 percent.

HB 621 / SB 700 will 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 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest registration fee at \$100/product.

The legislation is expected to raise approximately \$130,000 annually, which will provide additional funding to be combined with existing funds for pesticide collection, assessment and reporting through the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

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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.*

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 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