

**For Immediate Release**

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**Advocates Optimistic about Maryland Pesticide Reporting Work Group**

*Work Group Begins July 9<sup>th</sup> to Evaluate Data Gaps and Practical Solutions to  
Get Better Information about Pesticide Use*

(Annapolis, MD) -- Environmental and public health advocates praised the recent legislative co-chair appointments to the Maryland Pesticide Reporting and Information Work Group and said they were optimistic about the group's mission to identify existing data gaps in pesticide use and how best to fill them.

The group holds its first meeting, which is open to the public, from 9 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, July 9, in the House of Delegates Environmental Matters Committee Room in Annapolis. The work group was authorized by legislation passed this year by the General Assembly. Read more about the Pesticide Reporting and Information Work Group members and the July 9 meeting [here](#).

"Studies show that pesticides pose a serious risk to our health – particularly for children – and can contaminate our waters," said Dr. Andrea Kidd Taylor, a public health and toxicology expert from Morgan State University who will serve on the work group. "Experts need better information to protect Maryland families and the Chesapeake Bay. We look forward to reviewing the latest findings as well as how to get the information we need while making sure pesticide reporting is easy and protects confidentiality."

The work group will evaluate the latest scientific research, learn about existing data gaps, address stakeholders' concerns and questions, and make recommendations on gathering information about pesticide use in Maryland. The group's preliminary findings are due by the end of December 2013, with a final report due in July 2014.

"We're very pleased that Delegate Lafferty and Senator Manno have been chosen to co-chair the pesticides workgroup," said Chris Trumbauer, of the West/Rhode Riverkeeper. "We know they share the concern of the majority of Marylanders about pesticide use and reporting, and we're confident they will lead an effective process that will help us move forward on the issue quickly."

Advocates say that making basic, non-homeowner pesticide use reporting information available to environmental and public health officials and research scientists is necessary to protect public health, as well as the Chesapeake Bay and local waterways.

Pesticide exposure is linked to many chronic illnesses, including asthma, autism spectrum disorders, ADHD, cancer, and Parkinson's disease, as well as to birth defects and fertility problems, and is known to be particularly dangerous to children. A large body of scientific evidence links pesticides to adverse health impacts on children's neurological, respiratory, immune, and endocrine systems – even at low exposure levels. Last year the American Academy of Pediatrics issued its [first policy statement](#) identifying the need for public health tracking of pesticides.

The recent Maryland Environmental Health Network's [progress report on children's environmental health](#) underscored the need to track pesticide use in order to be able to assess linkages to a wide range of childhood disorders.

Pesticides also contaminate local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay and have been linked to intersex fish in the Potomac River. The federal report [Toxic Contaminants in the Chesapeake Bay and its Watershed](#) confirms the need for more pesticide information in Maryland and details which pesticides are widespread in the Bay watershed and others for which there is insufficient data.

According to [statewide polling](#), eight in 10 voters are concerned about the risk of pesticides to their families' health, and a large majority (82 percent) favors making commercial pesticide use reporting mandatory.

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*The [Smart on Pesticides Maryland](#) – For Safe Waters & Healthy Kids campaign is a coalition of concerned Maryland citizens working to pass legislation creating a simple and cost-neutral, centralized online pesticide reporting database.*

*Smart on Pesticides is part of the Pesticides and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Project, which was established in 2007 by the Maryland Pesticide Network and the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. It is the first working group in Maryland dedicated to reducing the occurrence and risks of pesticides in the Bay watershed, in order to protect water quality, aquatic life, wildlife and public health. Project participants include scientists, public health experts, waterkeepers, watermen, representatives of the agricultural and pest management industries, and environmental organizations. Track activity on this issue by following @PesticidesSmart on Twitter.*