Advocating against harmful impacts of pesticides and for safer alternatives

In 1991, when an Annapolis woman became seriously ill and realized her symptoms worsened each time the state's mosquito control program sprayed her community with the neurotoxic pesticide malathion, she called a public town meeting with help from several environmental organizations, which attracted state media. This attention resulted in a state policy change that terminated the use of malathion for mosquito control and has protected Maryland (MD) residents from this use of malathion for decades. Two years later, in response to her son having a life-threatening reaction at his elementary school which sprayed a pesticide while the kids were in school. With the support of the MD PTA, she launched a coalition of 25 diverse organizations in 1994, known as the Maryland Pesticide Network (MPN). Working tirelessly for five years, in 1997 and 1998 the coalition was successful in its advocacy resulting in MD's legislature passing first-in-the-nation laws, the Integrated Pest Management in Schools Laws (indoors in 1997; outdoor grounds in 1998) which put common sense pesticide protections in place to prevent pesticide impacts to children's vulnerable developing bodies and brains, and avoid poisonings like what happened to her son. Today, this law has been replicated in 37 states to protect all children and staff from pesticides in public schools.

Maryland Pesticides Education Network (MPEN), now a 501c3 non-profit since 2012, has more than thirty years of focused work in pesticide protections, much of it ground-breaking. Our coalition-building roots are stronger, and MPEN is lauded by national organizations as the ***"most effective state pesticide group in the country."***

We're Protecting Maryland's Babies, Bees, and the Bay from the Worst Toxic Pesticides

Three of the ten groundbreaking laws we've won are **first-in-the-nation bee protections**. In 2016, we won passage of the Pollinator Protection Act banning bee-killing Neonicotinoids from consumer outdoor home garden products. In 2017, we won passage of a bill requiring "pesticide-free" pollinator-safe habitat for State lands. In 2020, achieved a state ban on all uses Chlorpyrifos that damages babies' brains and is the second deadliest pesticide for bees, birds, and pollinators. We continue fighting for the health and safety of Marylanders and our environment today.

"Forever Pesticides" in Our State

In our 2021 testing for PFAS in a mosquito pesticide used by the State in 2,100 communities, MPEN discovered the pesticide contained high levels of two PFAS that were not listed in the product's ingredients. Since then, SOPC has focused on

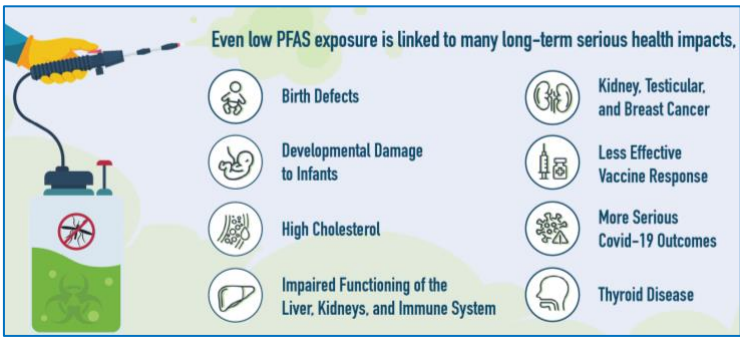
MPEN Programs Making the Difference

Educating Stakeholders & Decision Makers

Pesticides & the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Project, launched in 2006, brings together 300+ stakeholders including regional academic, federal, and state agency scientists, administrators and lawmakers, public health experts, waterkeepers, farmers, beekeepers, and environmental advocates. The Project facilitates stakeholder collaborations to reduce pesticide use/impacts in the Bay watershed via the Project's annual conference and three working groups focused on Research & Data Gaps; Healthier Alternatives; and Sustainable Agriculture. Recent accomplishments include the release of a report to regional Bay Cabinets and others, "Communicating Recent Pesticide Research Findings to Stakeholders, 2010-2021"; Managing Mosquitoes Without Pesticides campaign; emerging science presentations at our virtual conferences (video recordings of 2023, 2022, 2021).

Winning New Pesticide Protection Laws

Smart on Pesticides Coalition (SOPC), comprised of 100+ state and national organizations and businesses, has won passage for ten groundbreaking pesticide protection laws in Maryland. We educate lawmakers, watchdog the State's implementation of these laws, and facilitate public education and engagement via action alerts, a monthly newsletter, and through social media on needed pesticide-related actions. Current legislative efforts focus on banning PFAS forever chemicals as active ingredients in pesticides.



educating legislators and the public about pesticides, already known to be hazardous, that are also PFAS forever chemicals. Since 2022, we work to ban PFAS from pesticides in the state. MPEN has also established a coalition of national and state environmental groups who share this concern and are collaborating to more effectively enact PFAS protections in pesticides.

SOPC's current legislative focus is to pass a bill to ban 66 PFAS active ingredients in over 1,000 pesticides used for mosquito control, agricultural crops, indoor use in hospitals, schools, and homes, to protect the public from unnecessary PFAS contamination. The bill, which was well-supported at its 2024 hearing but ran out of time to complete passage, will be reintroduced in the 2025 Maryland General Assembly session.

Please Donate Now to Support Our Important Work

Collaborating with Decision Makers for Positive Change

MPEN flagship Pesticides & the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Project, now in its 18th year, facilitates an annual virtual conference for stakeholders and 3 working groups comprised of volunteers from its stakeholder audience who collaborate throughout the year to advance projects. Its Research & Data Gaps Working Group will soon publish a new report, that will be shared with regional and state agencies, commissions, and stakeholders, "*Pesticides & the Chesapeake Bay Watershed: Communicating Recent Pesticide Research to Inform Stakeholders, 2010-2021*."

Visit us at www.MdPestNet.org

Protecting Underserved High Risk Communities

Marylanders for Food & Farm Worker Protection (MFFWP) a coalition of 15 organizations and labor experts launched and led by MPEN in March 2020 when a lack of needed PPE was spotlighted during the pandemic, advocates for safeguards for farm workers, poultry workers, and crab pickers who have been made vulnerable by our industrial food system. Our work was instrumental in getting an Emergency Temporary Standard, a more protective Heat Stress Standard for Marylanders and amplifying the need for better data collection and pesticide protections.

Protecting Vulnerable Patients and Children

The IPM in Health Care Facilities Project launched in 2006, promotes Maryland health care facilities' implementations of non-chemical pest/weed prevention whereby least-toxic pesticides are only used as a last resort. Our work with healthcare facilities protects thousands from unnecessary exposure to pesticides, linked to the very illnesses for which patients are being treated. The Project also educates facilities in replacing toxic pesticide-registered disinfectants with safer options through its program, newsletter and website.

The IPM in Schools Project promotes the implementation of Md's IPM in Schools laws, which require schools to eliminate indoor and grounds use of chemical pesticides and to implement a prioritized Integrated Pest Management system with parental, and staff notification, and only if all non-toxic measures fail are pesticides to be considered.

SaferDisinfectants.org is a searchable, sortable website for EPA's List N disinfectants approved for COVID-19, to help consumers, schools, institutions, organizations, and businesses identify and use safer disinfecting products rather than products which increase health risks.

Driving Marketplace Change to Organic Choices

Vote with Your Wallet, Vote with Your Fork – Go Organic! Campaign promotes the needed paradigm shift to an organic lifestyle to protect health and increase consumer demand for organic products and services. GoOrganicMd.org / Go OrganicNow.org.

Seeding Climate Stabilizing Land Care Practices

Healthy Soils Campaign educates government agencies, farmers, land care companies, and the public on the urgently needed transition to organic land care and farming to optimize carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change via Video webinars and social media campaigns.