

Sept 17, 2020

Ms. Marea E. Grant & Ms. Marilyn C. Bracken
Co-Chairs, Environment & Energy Committee
Chevy Chase Village
5906 Connecticut Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Re: Montgomery County Lawn Pesticide Law

Good evening Madam Chair and everyone,

My name is Shruti Bhatnagar. I am the Chair of Sierra Club Montgomery County. I am presenting this testimony to urge the Village of Chevy Chase to opt-in to the Montgomery County lawn pesticide law, aka Healthy Lawns Act.

The Sierra Club Montgomery County group and Maryland Chapter strongly support the Montgomery County lawn pesticide law, aka Healthy Lawns Act, as it would move the County towards safe, healthy communities.

The county Healthy Lawns Act restricts the use of these dangerous pesticides on lawns, playgrounds, mulched recreation areas, and childcare facilities allowing for safer products and encouraging more sustainable lawn care practices — this fully protects people’s health, pets and our environment from unnecessary exposure to harmful pesticides.

Even when the chemicals are used according to its label, chemical trespass happens. Lawn pesticides do not stay put — they run-off and can drift for miles from their application site. This poses health risks to people, creates involuntary exposure to vulnerable children and pets, pollutes the air in communities, contaminates water bodies, and poisons the habitat of our region’s birds, bees and other wildlife, many which are in crisis.

Many pesticides have been associated with cancers, birth defects, reproductive and neurological effects, asthma and respiratory effects, and are endocrine disruptors which affect the normal regulation of our body. And now, coronavirus adversely affects people at a greater rate who are immune-compromised or have underlying health conditions,

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has warned that prenatal and early childhood exposure to pesticides, which include landscaping pesticides, are associated with childhood cancers, decreased brain functions, and behavioral problems.¹

Today, as our country faces the biggest public health threat of our time with COVID-19, getting outdoors for our mental and physical well-being is more important than ever. During these challenging times the use of outdoor spaces is being encouraged as a safe way for residents to have social interaction which makes it even more essential to ensure that harmful chemical pesticides are restricted from use to create safe outdoor environments in our local neighborhoods and communities.



This pandemic has made clearly evident, action to protect public health cannot wait.

Incorporated cities and towns, *alongside* its communities and businesses, can show residents that going pesticide-free is a work in progress, that embracing lawn diversity and native plants are fundamental to ecosystem resilience and public health. There is no better time than *now* to opt-in, to join the surrounding Montgomery County in protecting people's health and our outdoors by embracing sustainable, pesticide-free lawn care.

I urge you to adopt the county's Healthy Lawns Act to ensure the safety of the community, species and the environment.

Thank you!

Shruti Bhatnagar, Chair
Sierra Club Montgomery County Group
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ⁱ Pesticide Exposure in Children. American Academy of Pediatrics. Dec 2012.
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/6/e1757>