



Legislation Text

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Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Clarke

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning **Request for Federal Action - Farm Bill Conference Committee - Rejection of the 2018 Farm Bill's Amendment Preempting Local Regulation of Pesticides**

For the purpose of calling on members of the United States House of Representatives & United States Senate Farm Bill Conference Committee to reject the 2018 Farm Bill's amendment to Section 24(a) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) (7 U.S.C. 136v(a)) that preempts localities' rights to regulate pesticides in their communities.

Recitals

The United States House of Representatives passed its 2018 Farm Bill in June. This Bill included an amendment to FIFRA that preempts localities' rights to regulate pesticides in their communities. Members of the United States House of Representatives & United States Senate Farm Bill Conference Committee are now trying to create a final version of the 2018 Farm Bill before September ends. In a last minute appeal, the Baltimore City Council requests that the Conference Committee reject the amendment to FIFRA regarding preemption of local pesticide regulation.

In Maryland, local jurisdictions can regulate the use of pesticides in their communities. The 2018 Farm Bill's amendment to Section 24(a) of FIFRA ignores the policy of Maryland and the power of local jurisdictions to protect the health and well being of our citizens. The Maryland legislature, in the 1990s, chose to allow localities to regulate pesticides. The state legislators understood that pesticides should be regulated by local authorities - those who know the needs of their communities best.

Baltimore City cares about protecting its residents from potentially harmful pesticides. The City has educated its Department of Recreation & Park's staff to not use pesticides on almost 6,000 acres of parkland within City boundaries. No pesticides are used on the 17,000 plus acres that surround the three water supply reservoirs in Baltimore and Carroll Counties.

Baltimore City is also proud to maintain Canton Waterfront Park with pesticide-free land care. Baltimore City achieved this in partnership with the Pesticides & The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Project, a group with project stakeholders including scientists, waterkeepers, and representatives of the agricultural community.

Citizens in other jurisdictions are equally passionate about local governance of potentially harmful pesticides. Montgomery County passed an ordinance in 2015 that restricted the use of toxic pesticides in that community. The County lost a circuit court battle against a pesticide industry group in 2016, but are appealing that decision, with huge community support behind them, to the Maryland Court of Special Appeals. Montgomery County is backed by local groups such as the Central Maryland Beekeepers Association, Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility, and Maryland PIRG.

A movement is growing in Baltimore City for “clean air” and the reduction of unhealthy emissions, including the effect of harmful pesticides on public health, as demonstrated by the City’s policies in so many public park and reservoir acreage it controls.

Now is the wrong era in which to lose the local authorization to adopt measures coming to public attention which prevent harm to the health of our citizens.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Baltimore City Council requests members of the United States House of Representatives & United States Senate Farm Bill Conference Committee to vote against the 2018 Farm Bill’s amendment that would preempt the right of localities to regulate pesticides in their communities.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Chair and the ranking member of the House Committee on Agriculture, the Chair and the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry, the Maryland Congressional Delegation, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the Baltimore City Council.