

## Council to Hold Hearing on Pesticide Legislation

*Dec. 18th is date to start signing up to testify*

*Article submitted by Members of Safe Grow Montgomery*



County lawmakers have listened to residents across Montgomery County concerning unwanted exposure to harmful cosmetic lawn pesticides, including synthetic herbicides, insecticides, and others used for non-essential aesthetic purposes on manicured grasses. Thanks to the efforts of Council President George Leventhal, Bill 52-14 has been introduced to address residents' concerns. Councilmembers Marc Elrich, Nancy Floreen, Nancy Navarro, and Hans Riemer have all signed on to the bill as co-sponsors. CM partner organization [Safe Grow Montgomery](#) (SGM) has led the charge to request county-wide pesticide legislation.

A County Council hearing is set for January 15, 2015. It will be important for residents to testify and express concern about these harmful chemicals used on lawns. The lawn care industry and others have already mounted an aggressive campaign to stop or weaken the legislation.

If adopted, this would be a landmark ordinance to protect families, especially children and pregnant women, pets, wildlife (including pollinators), our waterways, and the wider environment from the hazards of the unnecessary use of lawn pesticides in Montgomery County. The ubiquitous use of these pesticides in landscaping has given many the false notion that these chemicals are harmless.

While U.S. EPA regulatory policies can lag by decades in adequately acting on the growing body of scientific evidence of pesticides' adverse effects on human and environmental health, Bill 52-14 is an important step for a local community like Montgomery County to proactively protect the health of its residents, especially those that are most vulnerable. Adult and pediatric cancers, reproductive, endocrine and neurological problems, Parkinson's Disease, learning disabilities, ADHD, autism, asthma, and other harms to our body also financially impact individuals and the County in terms of health expenses and lost productivity at work and school.

Babies and children are uniquely susceptible to the harms posed by pesticides due to their rapidly developing bodies and immature immune system. In 2012, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) reviewed the available scientific literature and issued a landmark report and statement that, "prenatal and early childhood exposure to pesticides is associated with pediatric cancers, decreased cognitive function and behavioral problems." The AAP identified lawn and garden pesticide applications as a source and mechanism of exposure and recommended government agencies work towards reducing children's pesticide exposure.

Lawn pesticides indiscriminately expose everyone without consent. The use and effects of these pesticides does not end at invisible property borders - the chemical vapors and dust can move off target for miles, contaminating our common air, water, and soil. In urban settings, lawns are situated closer to where large numbers of people live, work, shop, and play, making it difficult for the public to avoid pesticide exposure from treated spaces, and place families and communities in a constant state of toxic assault. The public, especially children, are commonly exposed to the harmful effects of these pesticides through inhaling, absorbing, or ingesting of these pesticide particles.

Most of Canada has implemented similar policies restricting the use of cosmetic pesticides. They have demonstrated success with these policies. This bill will place Montgomery County as leaders in Maryland moving towards healthy sustainable lawn care. It is SGM's hope that all Council members will support Bill 52-14 in the protection of public health throughout Montgomery County.

CM and SGM encourage residents, businesses, and organizations to contact council members in support of the bill and attend the hearing.

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