

PAC Meeting Minutes

April 23, 2025

VIA Google Meets

Attendees

Members

Dr. Frederick Kutz, Chair
Dr. Cliff Mitchell
Lillian Deery
Lindsay Thompson
Logan Freeman
Marcie Hardin

Speakers/Guests

Anji Cooper	Rachel Jones
April Vingum	Sean Lynch
Debbie Roy	Steven Chow
Eguono Omagamre	Tom Phillips
Jacob Cram	Tracy Severcool
Michael Ichniowski	Veronika Carella
Michella Salvitti	Zachary Schafer
Paul Hlavinka	

Staff

Rob Hofstetter
Kelly Love
Alexander Lehmann
Jessica Koontz

Pesticide and PFAS Legislative Updates

Rachel Jones, Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA)

- **Certification Plan for Restricted Use Pesticides**

- Maryland's updated certification plan, approved by EPA in November 2023, was codified into state law.
- Requires commercial and private applications by certified individuals or those under supervision.
- Status: Passed and signed into law on April 8, 2024.

- **HB 386 / SB 345: PFAS Chemicals Prohibition**

- Intended to ban pesticides containing any of 66 EPA-listed PFAS compounds.
- Amended by House workgroup to affect only 60–80 products.
- Status: Passed House; failed in Senate.

- **SB 732 / HB 909: PFAS Limits in Biosolids**

- Proposed limits on land application of biosolids with PFAS.
- Initial cap of 1 ppb amended to 1 µg/kg.
- Strong opposition from wastewater treatment facilities.
- Status: Did not pass.

HB 1342: Pesticide Use on State-Owned Property

- Would have required MDA to develop a pesticide/pollinator habitat plan for state land.
- MDA and DNR already maintain similar plans.
- MDA committed to administrative implementation without legislation.
- Status: Not enacted.

- **Conclusion**

Of the four pesticide/PFAS-related bills, one was enacted, two failed after amendments and stakeholder input, and one is being handled administratively.

Dr. Steven Chow's Presentation on PFAS Research

- Dr. Steven Chow conducted PFAS research at Johns Hopkins University (2019–2023) and currently works in Switzerland.
- His studies span bottled water, urban watersheds in Maryland, and wastewater treatment in Switzerland.

- **Key Findings in Maryland**

- **Bottled Water Study (2020)**
 - PFAS detected in 39% of 100+ bottled water samples from 19 Baltimore-area stores.
 - Natural spring waters showed higher PFAS levels than purified waters.
 - Reverse osmosis found to be highly effective in PFAS removal.
- **Urban Watershed Study (2022)**

- Samples from 10 sites across Gwynns Falls, Jones Falls, and Herring Run showed consistent PFAS profiles.
 - Suggests widespread low-level environmental contamination.
- **PFAS Transport and Sources**
 - Atmospheric deposition identified as a major pathway for PFAS spread.
 - Historical precipitation data (1998–1999) from Smith Island, MD, confirmed PFAS presence in rainwater.
- **Swiss Wastewater Study (2023–2024)**
 - Survey of 21 treatment plants covering ~25% of Swiss population.
 - Significant decrease in legacy PFAS (e.g., C8) due to national bans and sludge incineration.
 - Emerging PFAS (e.g., 6:2 FTAB and ultra-short chain compounds) found in higher concentrations.
- **Analytical Recommendations**
 - Expand testing methods beyond EPA Method 1633 to include:
 - **Suspect screening** (using high-resolution mass spectrometry)
 - **TOP assays** (for precursor transformation detection)
 - **Extractable organofluorine** (for total fluorinated compounds)
- **Conclusion**
 - PFAS science and regulations are rapidly evolving.
 - Emphasized the importance of preserving samples for future analysis as detection methods improve.

Public Input

Veronika Carella

Requested compliance with Maryland’s sunshine laws for future meetings and for meeting minutes to be posted publicly.

Called for MDA to fully enforce EPA product labels, noting it’s a federal offense to use pesticides inconsistently with their approved labelin

Raised concerns that some MDA-certified applicators have provided altered product labels during inspections, removing important restrictions like wind and safety requirements — a documented violation in a case study involving 120 pesticide applications.

Criticized MDA's pesticide regulation section for failing to review compliance with EPA labels during investigations of pesticide poisoning and application complaints.

Highlighted specific areas of non-enforcement, including:

- Windspeed drift restrictions
- Groundwater contamination risks
- Buffer zones (e.g., 250-foot setbacks)
- Protection of unprotected persons nearby
- Prohibited applications to hardscapes and beyond property lines
- Restrictions on applying to turf with standing water
- Annual product quantity and frequency limits

Requested MDA provide a plan at the next meeting for ensuring full enforcement of EPA label requirements to protect public health, the environment, and especially children.

Debbie Roy – Was unable to present due to technical difficulties