

Healthy Kids, Healthy Maryland

Companies are allowed to put nearly any chemical they want into the products we use every day, despite the fact that the government doesn't test most chemicals for safety or require any pre-market approval. Maryland PIRG supports policies to reduce our exposure to chemicals linked to harmful health and environmental impacts.

Family and Fire Fighter Protection (SB902/HB1264)

Senator Hayes and Delegate Cullison

Restricts toxic flame retardant chemicals from furniture and children's products to protect families and fire fighters. These chemicals are not effective for fire safety and commonly used chemical flame retardants are linked to cancer, lower IQ and poor attention in children, hormone disruption, thyroid effects, and obesity. There are safer, more effective alternatives to these chemicals.

Lead in School Drinking Water (SB481/HB1253)

Senator McCray and Delegate Solomon

Expands lead testing requirements for lead in school drinking water by lowering the action level and creating a grant program to help schools remediate.

Ban Deadly Paintstrippers (SB82/HB299)

Senator Lam and Delegate Hill

Bans methylene chloride (DCM) and N-methylpyrrolidone (NMP) in paint and coating removal for commercial and consumer use. DCM and NMP are linked to negative health impacts and can cause immediate death, including 3 known deaths in Maryland. Safer alternatives are readily available.

Ban Chlorpyrifos (SB270/HB275)

Senator Nathan-Pulliam and Delegate Stein

Bans the use of the toxic insecticide chlorpyrifos, and other insecticides containing chlorpyrifos.

IMPLEMENTATION ALERT

The Keep Antibiotics Effective Act SB471/HB652

Senators Pinsky and Nathan-Pulliam and Delegate Love

The Keep Antibiotics Effective Act of 2017 expanded on federal policy to stop the routine use of antibiotics of animals that are not sick and passed with strong bi-partisan support.

Unfortunately, the Maryland Department of Agriculture enacted regulations that undermine the intent of the law, despite concerns from legislators, health professionals, and advocates.

Antibiotic overuse on farms is causing our most life-saving medicines to become less effective. An estimated 160,000 Americans die every year from antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and the Centers for Disease Control warns that "much of the antibiotic use in animals is unnecessary and inappropriate and makes everyone less safe."

In the U.S. two thirds of antibiotics important to human medicine are sold for use on animals. They are often fed in routine, low doses to animals that aren't sick to prevent diseases that can be caused by poor diets and stressful, cramped or unsanitary living conditions. This routine use of low dose antibiotics on industrial farms facilitates the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, which can travel off of farms and into the community.

The Keep Antibiotics Effective Act of 2019 will ensure that MDA enforces the law as intended by codifying definitions, requiring notification of effected farms, and requiring reporting on the use of medically important antibiotics on farms.

Maryland PIRG's mission is to deliver persistent, result-oriented public interest activism that protects consumers, encourages a fair, sustainable economy, and fosters democratic government.

Democracy for the People

The influence of wealthy special interests in elections has eroded public trust in our political system and helped depress civic participation. We should ensure all eligible voters are able to have their voice heard on Election Day.

Election Day Registration (SB449/HB286)

Senator Pinsky and Delegate Reznik

Allows eligible voters to register to vote, update their registration, and vote on Election Day.

Maryland Small Donor Incentive Act (HB1016)

Delegate Mosby

Creates a campaign finance program for statewide legislative offices that enable candidates to run for office without large or corporate campaign contributions by providing limited matching funds for small donations.

Prohibiting Corporate Campaign Contributions (HB1130)

Delegate Ivey

Prohibits business entities from making contributions to candidates for office.

Don't Trash Maryland

Nothing we use for a few minutes should threaten our health and pollute our environment for hundreds of years. The waste we produce means more leaky landfills, dirty air from incinerators, and more litter and litter cleanup costs. Maryland PIRG supports policies that are dedicated to the principles of reduce, reuse, recycle and put us on a path to zero waste.

Foam Free Maryland (SB285/HB109)

Senator Kagan and Delegate Lierman

Bans single use foam food packaging like cups, plates and clamshell containers from food service businesses and selling these produces in retail.

Transit Not Traffic

Our transportation system accounts for 36% of the greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland, more than any other source. Maryland has some of the worst traffic in the nation. Our roads, bridges and transit infrastructure are all lagging. If we want safe, modern and equitable transportation that meets our needs, we need to take action to invest in, reform, and modernize our transportation systems.

Transportation & Climate Accountability Act (SB788/HB695)

Senator Rosapepe and Delegate Stewart

Requires the Maryland Department of Environment to conduct thorough environmental reviews of major public-private partnership transportation projects. The review would measure the greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and stormwater impacts of such projects, and also evaluate impacts to vulnerable communities.

Zero-Emission School Buses (HB1255)

Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo

Requires all new school bus purchases be zero-emissions by October 2025. The vast majority of school buses remain dirty – burning fossil fuels like diesel that put the health of our children and communities at risk and contribute to global warming. It's time to switch to all-electric buses.

Consumer Protection

Maryland should be able to participate in the marketplace without concern about hidden fees, scams, safety risks, or privacy violations. Massive data breaches at Equifax and Marriott underscored how vulnerable our data is to hackers, and the Cambridge Analytica debacle demonstrated that the collection and use of our personal data online can easily be misused.

Online Consumer Protection Act (SB613/HB901)

Senator Lee and Delegate Carey

Gives consumers control over their own data to keep it secure from identity thieves. It gives people the right to control the sale and disclosures of their data, and allows them to request companies delete the information they have about them. It prohibits the sale or disclosure of children's information if they are younger than 18 years old.

Student Loan Servicing (SB670/HB594)

Senate President and Speaker of the House by request of the Office of the Attorney General

This bill aims to protect student borrowers from unfair, abusive, and deceptive trade practices by setting clear rules for student loan servicers. It prohibits student loan servicers from employing any scheme, device, or artifice to mislead borrowers. We would also support a further step of requiring licensing for student loan borrowers.

For more information about Maryland PIRG's 2019 Legislative Agenda, to request our support for a bill, or to ask about our position on a specific issue, please don't hesitate to reach out. We look forward to working with you. – Emily Scarr, Maryland PIRG Director emily@marylandpirg.org

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