



House Bill 472

Agriculture - Use of Glyphosate - Prohibition

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 3, 2021

From: Alex Butler

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 472 as it would unnecessarily financially and operationally burden a variety of local government weed control efforts. A complete prohibition on the use of glyphosate would force county agencies to divert already limited taxpayer resources from other public efforts.

HB 472, as written, would prohibit the use of glyphosate in the state on or after October 1, 2022. MACo understands that the bill will be amended to only prohibit the use by state or local government agencies. Counties remain concerned that an outright ban on government property may deny some current reasonable practices, dictated by project or geography.

Glyphosate is the most widely used herbicide in the country. It remains one of the most effective tools to combat invasive species, making it an essential measure for local governments who maintain forests, parks, transportation infrastructure, and other outdoor areas. Counties already use glyphosate and other weed management tools sparingly, taking into account the needs of their communities when developing policies. This can be combined with limitations on use in high pedestrian traffic areas, and public notice procedures.

A recent decision from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) concluded that when used properly, glyphosate poses no risks of concern to human health. Out of an abundance of caution, the Maryland Association of County Parks and Recreation Administrators (MACPRA) currently advises its members to adhere to best practices for safe use of glyphosate.

Alternatives to glyphosate are typically more expensive, and significantly less effective. County agencies deploy these alternatives where practicable but maintain that appropriate use of glyphosate is necessary to effectively manage weeds in public facilities. MACo recognizes the intent of HB 472 but believes it has significant cost and implementation challenges. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to provide an **UNFAVORABLE** report for HB 472.