Annapolis, MD - Upon learning that a bill to ban the toxic pesticide chlorpyrifos (HB 275 / SB 546) would not move forward to the Senate floor for a vote, Ruth Berlin, head of the Smart on Pesticides Coalition, released the following statement:

“We are extremely disappointed that the bill to ban chlorpyrifos will not pass the full General Assembly this year, despite approval by the House of Delegates. For every day this pesticide remains in use, our children, waterways, pollinators and other wildlife remain at risk. With 70,000 births each year in Maryland, we urgently need to protect our state from the harmful effects of this toxic nerve agent chemical.

Our coalition will be back next year to ensure a strong bill makes it across the finish line. We hope next year’s legislation will ban chlorpyrifos sooner than if this year’s bill had passed -- as it had been amended to include a lengthy delay. We thank Senator Pinsky for his commitment to getting this done in the Senate early in the 2020 session.

We also thank our sponsors Delegate Stein and Senator Shirley Nathan-Pulliam for their leadership this year, as well as the many Maryland citizens, public health advocates, beekeepers, scientists, farmers and others who urged the legislature to protect our kids, wildlife and environment.”

Chlorpyrifos was confirmed to cause brain damage in children by U.S. EPA scientists and is linked to neurodevelopmental issues, autism spectrum disorders, learning disabilities and cancer in children. It is one of the pesticides most often linked to farmworker poisonings. It is also a major concern for the health of aquatic life and the Chesapeake Bay and is the second most harmful pesticide for pollinators.

In 2015, after extensive study over two decades, EPA scientists confirmed that chlorpyrifos cannot be considered safe at any detectible level and recommended that the pesticide be banned. The Trump Administration reversed that decision, and the issue remains tied up in the federal court system.

Hawaii remains the only state to enact a ban on chlorpyrifos, although several other states have introduced legislation to do so, as has Senator Udall at the federal level.

View a fact sheet about the chlorpyrifos bill here.