



July 06, 2020

**Gaithersburg City Council  
Gaithersburg City Hall  
31 South Summit Avenue  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877**

**Testimony On: Opt-in to Montgomery County Lawn Pesticide Law  
Position: Support**

**Dear Gaithersburg Mayor Ashman and Gaithersburg City Council,**

The Sierra Club Montgomery County group and the Maryland Chapter strongly urge the Gaithersburg City to opt-in to the Montgomery County lawn pesticide law, aka Healthy Lawns Act, to protect public health.

We thank the City council for adopting a plan to restrict pesticide on the city property. It is equally important to protect public health by implementing the same measures on private property.

It is Sierra Club's vision for people to explore, enjoy and protect the great outdoors. Today, as our country faces the biggest public health threat of our time, COVID-19, getting outdoors for our mental and physical well-being is more important than ever. Whether it be in our neighborhoods and local parks or supporting our local businesses that offer outdoor eating and classes, to children's summer camps, these outdoor spaces and activities now play an increasingly important role in our daily lives. This makes it prudent that Gaithersburg protect people's health by making outdoor spaces safe by ending exposure to harmful lawn pesticides.

Exposure to harmful pesticides used on such large areas of the lawns that surround us pose an additional health risk to people at a time we can least afford more impacts on our health. Many pesticides have been linked to cancers, birth defects, reproductive and neurological effects, asthma and respiratory effects, and are endocrine disruptors which affect the normal regulation of our body. And now, coronavirus adversely affects people at a greater rate who are immune-compromised or have underlying health conditions.

During these challenging times when the use of outdoor spaces is being encouraged as a way for community members to have any necessary in-person social interaction, it has become even more essential to ensure that harmful chemical pesticides are restricted from use to create a safe environment.

As this pandemic has made clearly evident, action to protect public health cannot wait. It would be prudent to roll out this effort on private property now, to move forward quickly in the interest of the residents. The City, *alongside* its communities and businesses, can show



residents that going pesticide-free is a work in progress, that embracing lawn diversity and native plants are fundamental to ecosystem resilience and public health.

There is no better time than *now* to opt-in, to join the surrounding Montgomery County in protecting people's health and our outdoors by moving the Gaithersburg communities towards sustainable, pesticide-free lawn care.

Gaithersburg families deserve the health and environmental protections that the majority of Montgomery County now enjoys in the Healthy Lawns Act. Sierra Club asks you for a favorable vote to opt-in to the county's pesticide law.

Sincerely,

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