
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 133 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY CRUZ, KINSEY, CIRESI, HARKINS, HILL-EVANS AND
MURT, MARCH 8, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS,
MARCH 8, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a
2 study on pesticide exposure and poisoning, testing and
3 reporting and to issue a report.

4 WHEREAS, The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide
5 Act is the Federal statute governing the registration,
6 distribution, sale and use of pesticides throughout the United
7 States; and

8 WHEREAS, A pesticide is defined in the Pennsylvania Pesticide
9 Control Act of 1973 as "any substance or mixture of substances
10 intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating
11 any pest, and any substance or mixture of substances intended
12 for use as a plant regulator, defoliant, or desiccant"; and

13 WHEREAS, Pesticides are widely used to control pests such as
14 insects, rodents, weeds, mold, fungi and bacteria; and

15 WHEREAS, Although utilized in and around buildings, homes,
16 forests, parks and schools, pesticides are also consistently
17 applied to crops by the agricultural industry; and

18 WHEREAS, Eighty percent of the 16,000 pesticide products that

1 are registered with the United States Environmental Protection
2 Agency (EPA) are used by the agricultural industry; and

3 WHEREAS, Agriculture has a long-ingrained history within this
4 Commonwealth and continues to be one of the top economic
5 industries; and

6 WHEREAS, The agricultural sector continues to rank among the
7 most hazardous industries nationally, with farmworkers
8 experiencing high rates of fatal and nonfatal injuries and
9 illnesses; and

10 WHEREAS, The injury rates were higher in 2015 for farmworkers
11 than for workers in other known hazardous occupations, such as
12 fishing and hunting, forestry and logging, mining and
13 construction; and

14 WHEREAS, Given the greater use of pesticides in cultivating
15 crops, the groups employed in the agricultural industry are most
16 exposed and at elevated risk of illness or injury; and

17 WHEREAS, Studies indicate that underreporting of occupational
18 illness and poisoning is common, with an estimated rate of
19 underreporting ranging from 20% to 70%; and

20 WHEREAS, Recognizing worker risk, the Federal Insecticide,
21 Fungicide and Rodenticide Act includes a specific section
22 addressing worker protection standards; and

23 WHEREAS, The worker protection standards were revised by the
24 EPA in November 2015 for the first time since 1992; and

25 WHEREAS, Most provisions of the revised worker protection
26 standards were implemented in January 2017; and

27 WHEREAS, The EPA delayed until June 2018 the implementation
28 of the Worker Protection Standard that requires employers to
29 enact expanded pesticide safety training, include stronger
30 content and establish recordkeeping; and

1 WHEREAS, Every organ system in the body is susceptible to
2 pesticide toxicity, with recent studies showing that not only
3 workers, but pregnant women and their developing babies and
4 children are particularly vulnerable; and

5 WHEREAS, Underreporting and gaps in oversight data are
6 recognized problems with respect to occupational illness among
7 agricultural workers; and

8 WHEREAS, The acute work-related pesticide poisoning incidence
9 rate ranges as high as 1,400 cases per 100,000 agricultural
10 workers per year; and

11 WHEREAS, The National Institute for Occupational Safety and
12 Health's Strategic Surveillance Plan recommends that every state
13 conduct surveillance for acute pesticide-related illness and
14 injury to identify pesticide problems, estimate the magnitude of
15 pesticide poisoning and evaluate intervention and prevention
16 efforts; and

17 WHEREAS, Thirty states, including Ohio, Maryland, New Jersey
18 and New York, require health professionals to report suspected
19 pesticide poisoning; and

20 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is one of 23 states and jurisdictions
21 that do not require reporting of suspected pesticide poisoning
22 by health professionals; therefore be it

23 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint
24 State Government Commission to conduct a study on pesticide
25 exposure and poisoning, testing and reporting and to issue a
26 report to the General Assembly; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission seek
28 input and information, as appropriate, from the following:

29 (1) The Department of Health.

30 (2) The Department of Labor and Industry.

1 (3) The Department of Agriculture.

2 (4) The Department of Environmental Protection.

3 (5) The Insurance Department.

4 (6) Federal agencies that oversee regulation of
5 pesticides.

6 (7) Individuals specializing in toxicology,
7 epidemiology, medicine, data management, occupational and
8 environmental health and industrial hygiene.

9 (8) Other agencies, organizations or persons that the
10 commission deems appropriate;

11 and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the report of the Joint State Government
13 Commission contain findings and recommendations and include any
14 proposed legislation regarding the following:

15 (1) The threat pesticide exposure poses to public
16 health.

17 (2) A cost-benefit analysis for employers providing
18 adequate information, safety gear and training and in taking
19 all necessary precautions to prevent pesticide exposure and
20 pesticide-related illness and injury.

21 (3) The feasibility of this Commonwealth developing and
22 implementing a Statewide pesticide-related illness and injury
23 related surveillance program.

24 (4) Identification of available money, including Federal
25 and State money, to develop and implement a Statewide
26 pesticide-related illness and injury-related surveillance
27 program, if feasible;

28 and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue a
30 report of its findings and recommendations to the General

1 Assembly within 18 months of the adoption of this resolution.