



March 2, 2021

Submitted via www.mainelegislature.org/testimony/

Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Cross Building, Room 214
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Testimony in opposition to LD 125 - An Act to Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture

Chairs Dill and O'Neil and Members of the Committee:

There is ongoing discussion about glyphosate, the active ingredient in most Roundup® brand herbicides and other weed-control products. Glyphosate-based herbicides are among the most widely-used crop protection products in modern agriculture, so it's understandable that people have questions about their safety, the impact they have on our food supply and our health.

We share Maine's commitment to public health, safety and environmental protection, but the proposed legislation is unnecessary and counterproductive to that goal. **We respectfully OPPOSE LD 125 and request an unfavorable vote.**

The benefits of glyphosate in Maine agriculture, especially, are significant. In the past, farmers controlled weeds by hand. With mechanization, farmers moved to plowing soil, which contributes to topsoil erosion. Using glyphosate-based herbicides, corn and soybean farmers can leave soil intact, supporting soil health and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Maine land managers need glyphosate as a tool for controlling vegetation that can impact railroad, highway and road safety; utility reliability, and; the ability to control invasive and noxious plants.

The widespread adoption of glyphosate-based products is due not only to their effectiveness and extensive economic and environmental benefits, but also due to the strong safety profile of these products.

There is an extensive body of research on glyphosate and Bayer's glyphosate-based herbicides, including more than 800 studies submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in connection with the registration process, which confirms these products can be used safely and that glyphosate does not cause cancer.



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When it comes to safety assessments, glyphosate is among the most extensively tested pesticides on the market. Evaluations spanning more than 40 years, and the overwhelming conclusion of experts and regulators worldwide, support the safety of glyphosate and that glyphosate does not cause cancer.

Regulatory authorities routinely review all approved pesticide products. Most recently, in January 2020, the U.S. EPA [published](#) its Interim Registration Review Decision on glyphosate and stated *“EPA has thoroughly evaluated potential human health risk associated with exposure to glyphosate and determined that there are no risks to human health from the current registered uses of glyphosate and that glyphosate is not likely to be carcinogenic to humans.”*

The EPA’s latest decision on glyphosate adds to the overwhelming consensus among leading expert health regulators worldwide for more than 40 years that these products can be used safely, and that glyphosate does not cause cancer. In addition to the U.S. EPA, the [European Food Safety Authority \(EFSA\)](#), the [European Chemicals Agency \(ECHA\)](#), and the leading health authorities in [Germany](#), [Australia](#), [Korea](#), [Canada](#), [New Zealand](#), [Japan](#), and elsewhere around the world continue to conclude that glyphosate-based products are safe when used as directed and that glyphosate does not pose a carcinogenic risk.

Glyphosate’s Classification by IARC

One non-regulatory organization presented a classification of glyphosate that was inconsistent with experts and regulatory authorities around the world – this organization was the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a sub-agency of the World Health Organization (WHO). In March 2015, IARC gave glyphosate a classification of “Category 2A: probably carcinogenic” despite evidence to the contrary. IARC is one of four programs within the WHO that has reviewed glyphosate, and the only one to have made such a finding.

IARC is not a regulatory authority and conducted no independent studies. IARC is the same organization that determined beer, meat, cell phones and hot beverages cause cancer or are likely to cause cancer.

IARC’s opinion is inconsistent with the overwhelming consensus of regulatory authorities and other experts around the world, who have assessed all the studies examined by IARC – and many more – and found that glyphosate presents no carcinogenic risk. Since IARC classified glyphosate in March 2015, regulatory authorities in the United States, Europe,



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Canada, Korea, Japan, New Zealand and Australia have publicly reaffirmed that glyphosate-based herbicides can be used safely, and that glyphosate does not pose a carcinogenic risk.

In January 2020, the U.S. EPA [explained](#) that “EPA considered a significantly more extensive and relevant dataset than the International Agency on the Research for Cancer (IARC). EPA’s database includes studies submitted to support registration of glyphosate and studies EPA identified in the open literature. For instance, IARC only considered eight animal carcinogenicity studies while EPA used 15 acceptable carcinogenicity studies. EPA does not agree with IARC’s conclusion that glyphosate is ‘probably carcinogenic to humans.’ EPA’s cancer classification is consistent with other international expert panels and regulatory authorities, including the Canadian Pest Management Regulatory Agency, Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority, European Food Safety Authority, European Chemicals Agency, German Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, New Zealand Environmental Protection Authority, and the Food Safety Commission of Japan and the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization/World Health Organization (FAO/WHO) Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR).”

Glyphosate is an important tool for farmers, foresters and land managers. We respectfully OPPOSE LD 125 as not justified by the science supporting the safety of glyphosate and urge an unfavorable vote. Thank you for the consideration.

Sincerely,

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¹ <https://www.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/glyphosate> [Retrieved February 1, 2021]

² <https://academic.oup.com/inci/article/110/5/509/4590280> [Retrieved February 12, 2019]

³ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/170523-efsa-statement-glyphosate.pdf> [Retrieved February 12, 2019]

⁴ <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2019/01/statement-from-health-canada-on-glyphosate.html> [Retrieved Feb. 12, 2019]

⁵ <https://www.who.int/foodsafety/jmprsummary2016.pdf?ua=1> [Retrieved February 12, 2019]

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29136183> [Retrieved February 12, 2019]

⁷ <https://www.epa.gov/iris/reference-dose-rfd-description-and-use-health-risk-assessments> [Retrieved February 12, 2019]

⁸ [http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/eu-pesticides-](http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/eu-pesticides-database/public/?event=activesubstance_detail&language=EN&selectedID=1438)

[database/public/?event=activesubstance_detail&language=EN&selectedID=1438](http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/eu-pesticides-database/public/?event=activesubstance_detail&language=EN&selectedID=1438) [Retrieved February 12, 2019]

⁹ <https://aghealth.nih.gov/> [Retrieved February 12, 2019]