



TO: Members of the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Cross Building
Room 214
Augusta, ME 04333

DATE: March 2, 2021

RE: L.D. 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 distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about L.D. 125, which would prohibit the aerial spraying of herbicides in forestry. **We respectfully oppose the bill and request an unfavorable vote.**

We support and promote science-based policy and regulatory processes that are necessary in the regulation of pesticide products at both the state and federal level. In addition to the extensive review and approval process EPA (The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) applies to pesticides, the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) and Board of Pesticides Control (BPC) also reviews pesticides before they are registered or used in the state. This dual layer of oversight and enforcement helps ensure safe and proper pesticide use across Maine, through state registration of pesticides, certification of pesticide applicators, and enforcement and research activities. DACF and BPC registration and regulation of pesticides also promotes consistency with federal regulation and scientific standards, particularly those for human health and safety and the environment. This bill would undermine that expertise and authority.

Following the passage of L.D. 1691, the BPC, in cooperation with the forest products industry, conducted an independent assessment of industrial forest management companies engaged in aerial application of herbicides on forestlands¹. The general results observed were, “The State of Maine regulatory framework, within which aerial application of herbicides in forest operations takes place, is functioning as designed,” and “we observed a consistent and genuine effort on the part of forest managers and pesticide applicators/suppliers to minimize reliance on and use of herbicides, principally through thorough planning and integrated pest management.” The monitoring results are counter to the intent of L.D. 125. A process was put forward in 2019 to review this practice, to which the results indicate there is not a need to act against or reform the practice, and that aerial application of herbicides, for the purpose of silviculture and forestry, is appropriately done within Maine’s existing regulations and guidelines.

¹ Report to the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee on Findings Pursuant to PL 2019, Chapter 84, SCS Global Services, Report Prepared for: Maine Board of Pesticides Control, 2019, https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/pesticides/documents2/bd_mtg/feb20/6e-combined.pdf

Herbicides are used to control and manage invasive and unwanted vegetation and are an important tool for forestry and natural resources management. Maine has over 17 million acres of forest land, and is one of the most, if not the most, forested states in the country.² The Maine Forest Service and private foresters rely on these tools for vegetation management, invasives control, and weed resistance. Prohibiting the use of herbicides would create unintended consequences, costing the state and foresters significantly in alternative solutions, adversely affecting vegetation management, and impacting forestry practices and yield.

Glyphosate is one of the most widely studied herbicides that have been developed, with more than 40 years on the market and 800 safety studies submitted to regulators in over 160 countries. No regulatory agency in the world has concluded that glyphosate is a carcinogen. In January 2020, EPA reaffirmed its findings that “there are no risks of concern to human health when glyphosate is used in accordance with its current label. EPA also found that glyphosate is unlikely to be a human carcinogen.”

We urge you to consider the report findings, rely on the expertise and regulatory process within the DCAF, BPC and EPA, and support your farmers and foresters through the availability of tools and technologies that are crucial to their work.

Sincerely,

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CropLife America (CLA) represents the manufacturers, formulators and distributors of crop protection products in the United States. CLA member companies produce, sell and distribute virtually all the crop protection products used by American farmers.

RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) is the national trade association representing manufacturers, formulators, distributors and other industry leaders engaged with specialty pesticides and fertilizers used by professionals and consumers.

² USDA Forest Service. 2020. Forests of Maine, 2019. Resource Update FS-236. Madison, WI: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. 2p. <https://doi.org/10.2737/FS-RU-236>