

Members of the Senate Agriculture Committee,

April 20, 2021

I am writing today concerning H. 434, which creates the Agricultural Innovation Board (AIB). I would strongly urge that you table this bill until the second half of the biennium when the people of the state can have a more thorough discussion of pesticide management in Vermont. Given the Covid situation, this session has not been ideal for trying to make sweeping policy changes.

I understand though that you would like to move this bill forward to improve and modernize the duties of the Vermont Pesticide Advisory Council (VPAC) and incorporate them into the AIB. What is missing from the current bill though, is the current Vermont policy to work towards "**the State goal of achieving an overall reduction in the use of pesticides**". It is imperative that this language is explicit in the bill, so it is clear that it is state policy. The current bill does not emphasize sufficiently that this is STATE POLICY, and this policy should not disappear.

Current statute states that VPAC shall:

... recommend targets with respect to the State goal of achieving an overall reduction in the use of pesticides consistent with sound pest or vegetative management practices and to measure the State's progress in reaching those targets and attaining that goal. The targets should be designed to enable evaluation of multiple measures of pesticide usage, use patterns, and associated risks. Targets should take into consideration at a minimum the following:

(A) reducing the amount of acreage where pesticides are used;

(B) reducing the risks associated with the use of pesticides;

(C) increasing the acreage managed by means of integrated pest management techniques;

(D) decreasing, within each level of comparable risk, the quantity of pesticides applied per acre; and

(E) making recommendations regarding the implementation of other management practices that result in decreased pesticide use.

Streamlining the language might be possible, but again, it is imperative that at an absolute minimum you add a sentence which states that the AIB "**will work towards the State goal of achieving an overall reduction in the use and toxicity of pesticides**"

Thank you for listening,

Nat Shambaugh,

Berlin, VT