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H.739

An act relating to prohibiting the use and sale of the herbicide paraquat
It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Paraquat or paraquat dichloride is a synthetic, nonselective contact herbicide that is a member of the bipyridylium chemical family and that defoliates all vegetation that it touches.

(2) Paraquat was first registered in the United States in 1964, and, in 1978, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classified all paraquat products as restricted use pesticides because of paraquat’s high acute toxicity and potential for poisoning.

(3) Paraquat has been widely used throughout the United States since its classification as a restricted use pesticide, and 24 currently registered pesticide products approved for use in the United States contain paraquat.

(4) The Pesticide Action Network’s 2024 Consolidated List of Banned Pesticides identifies 72 countries as banning the use of paraquat, including Brazil, China, Malaysia, Peru, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Turkey, and Vietnam.

(5) The European Union banned paraquat in 2007 after a court determined that the relevant regulatory body had failed to apply proper

1 procedures for evaluation of the herbicide and that the regulatory body was not
2 properly thorough in its assessments of paraquat's effects on human and
3 animal health.

4 (6) Multiple studies by the National Institutes of Health have
5 demonstrated that paraquat exposure substantially increases the risk of
6 Parkinson's disease in those exposed to the herbicide.

7 (7) Studies by the National Institutes of Health and others have linked
8 exposure to paraquat to increased risk of non-Hodgkin lymphoma and
9 childhood leukemia.

10 (8) In 2021, as part of a product registration review of paraquat required
11 under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), the
12 EPA issued an interim decision approving the continued registration of
13 paraquat for use in the United States, despite multiple public comments
14 objecting to approval and significant scientific evidence regarding the potential
15 health effects of paraquat exposure.

16 (9) Multiple parties subsequently moved to challenge the EPA interim
17 decision authorizing the continued registration and use of paraquat. In
18 particular, the challenging parties contested the EPA's assessment of the
19 increased risk of Parkinson's disease due to exposure to paraquat from
20 volatilization during use.

1 (10) In January 2025, after a petition from the EPA, a court allowed the
2 EPA to withdraw the interim registration approval for paraquat so that the EPA
3 may reconsider its initial conclusion concerning the potential for paraquat to
4 volatilize and to determine whether paraquat continues to meet FIFRA’s
5 registration standard.

6 (11) In October 2025, the EPA issued a memorandum titled
7 *PARAQUAT: Review of the Volatilization Potential of Paraquat from Field*
8 *Uses* and determined that there is a greater uncertainty regarding the potential
9 for paraquat to volatilize than previously understood. The EPA concluded that
10 more data is needed to understand the risk paraquat poses to bystanders.

11 (12) The EPA’s reevaluation of the risks of paraquat may take years,
12 and the EPA’s withdrawal of the interim registration and further evaluation
13 does not prohibit the continued use of paraquat during that review period.

14 (13) Instead of waiting for EPA action on whether or how to use
15 paraquat, the State of Vermont should ban the use of paraquat in order to
16 protect Vermonters from the known, significant health effects of exposure to
17 paraquat.

18 Sec. 2. 6 V.S.A. § 1105d is added to read:

19 § 1105d. USE AND SALE OF PARAQUAT; REPORT

20 (a) Definition. As used in this section, “paraquat” means an herbicide:

1 (1) known as paraquat, with the chemical name 1,1'-Dimethyl-4,4'-
2 bipyridinium ion and the Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) registry
3 number 4685-14-7;

4 (2) known as paraquat dichloride, with the chemical name 1,1'-
5 Dimethyl-4,4'-bipyridinium dichloride and the CAS registry number 1910-42-
6 5;

7 (3) known as paraquat dimethyl sulfate, with the chemical name 1,1'-
8 Dimethyl-4,4'-bipyridinium dimethyl sulfate and the CAS registry number
9 2074-50-2; or

10 (4) known as paraquat, with the chemical name 1,1'-Dimethyl-4,4'-
11 bipyridinium ion and all salts thereof.

12 (b) Prohibition. No person shall sell, use, or apply paraquat except when
13 authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets under subsection
14 (c) of this section.

15 (c) Authorized use. The Secretary may issue a written permit for the sale,
16 use, or application of paraquat within fruit-producing tree orchards only on or
17 before November 1, 2030. The Secretary shall ensure that any authorized
18 certified applicator of paraquat has received all training required by the
19 Environmental Protection Agency and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and
20 Markets not more than one year prior to receiving a permit for authorized use
21 of paraquat. A written exemption order under this subsection shall:

1 (1) not be valid for more than three years or until November 1, 2030,
2 whichever comes first; and

3 (2) specify the paraquat, uses, and crops or plants to which the permit
4 applies; the date the permit takes effect; the permit's duration; and the permit's
5 geographic scope, which may include specific farms, fields, or properties.

6 (d) Reporting. The Secretary shall report annually on all data regarding
7 any use of paraquat in the State. The report shall include the amount of
8 paraquat used and the date and location where the paraquat was used. The
9 Secretary shall submit the report to the House Committee on Agriculture, Food
10 Resiliency, and Forestry and the Senate Committee on Agriculture on or before
11 December 15 of each year.

12 Sec. 3. ALTERNATIVES TO PARAQUAT; STUDY; REPORT

13 The Agricultural Innovation Board shall study and report on
14 recommendations for alternatives to the use of paraquat for farmers. The
15 report shall include pesticide alternatives to paraquat, recommendations for
16 practices that reduce the use of and exposure to paraquat, and methods and
17 standards for transitioning farmers to practices that reduce paraquat usage.
18 The report shall also include recommendations for alternative pesticides to
19 paraquat and alternative farming practices to reduce the usage of paraquat in
20 the event paraquat becomes unavailable due to regulatory or commercial action
21 prior to November 1, 2030. On or before January 15, 2027, the Agricultural

1 Innovation Board shall submit the report to the House Committee on
2 Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry and the Senate Committee on
3 Agriculture.

4 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATES

5 (a) This section and Sec. 3 (alternatives to paraquat; study; report) shall
6 take effect on July 1, 2026.

7 (b) All other sections shall take effect on November 1, 2026.