

S.176

Introduced by Senators Gulick, Hardy, Lyons, Major, Perchlik, Plunkett,  
Vyhovsky and White

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Public health; agriculture; herbicides; paraquat; prohibition

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to prohibit the  
use of the herbicide paraquat in the State.

An act relating to prohibiting the use 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 kills  
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.

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

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

8           (5) The European Union banned paraquat in 2007 after a court  
9           determined that the relevant regulatory body had failed to apply proper  
10          procedures for evaluation of the herbicide and that the regulatory body was not  
11          properly thorough in its assessments of paraquat's effects on human and  
12          animal health.

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

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

19          (8) In 2021, as part of a product registration review of paraquat required  
20          under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), the  
21          EPA issued an interim decision approving the continued registration of

1     paraquat for use in the United States, despite multiple public comments  
2     objecting to approval and significant scientific evidence regarding the potential  
3     health effects of paraquat exposure.

4             (9) Multiple parties subsequently moved to challenge the EPA interim  
5     decision authorizing the continued registration and use of paraquat. In  
6     particular, the challenging parties contested the EPA's assessment of the  
7     increased risk of Parkinson's disease due to exposure to paraquat from  
8     volatilization during use.

9             (10) In January 2025, after a petition from the EPA, a court allowed the  
10    EPA to withdraw the interim registration approval for paraquat so that the EPA  
11    may reconsider its initial conclusion concerning the potential for paraquat to  
12    volatilize and to determine whether paraquat continues to meet FIFRA's  
13    registration standard.

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

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

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

2      § 1105d. USE AND SALE OF PARAQUAT

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

4          (1) known as paraquat, with the chemical name 1,1'-Dimethyl-4,4'-  
5      bipyridinium ion and the Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) Registry  
6      Number 4685-14-7; or

7          (2) known as paraquat dichloride, with the chemical name 1,1'-  
8      Dimethyl-4,4'-bipyridinium dichloride and the CAS Registry Number 1910-  
9      42-5.

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

13        (c) Authorized use. The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets may  
14      authorize the sale, use, or application of paraquat upon a determination that a  
15      threat to Vermont crops exists that requires the use of paraquat and no other  
16      herbicide or class of herbicides would be effective in addressing the threat.

17      Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

18          This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.