

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

11 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

12 The General Assembly finds that:

13 (1) Paraquat or paraquat dichloride is a synthetic, nonselective contact
14 herbicide that is a member of the bipyridinium chemical family and that kills
15 all vegetation that it touches.

16 (2) Paraquat was first registered in the United States in 1964, and in
17 1978, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classified all paraquat
18 products as restricted use pesticides because of paraquat's high acute toxicity
19 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.