



Overview

Many private landowners hire companies to apply pesticides in their yards to control pests such as mosquitoes and ticks. However, these pesticides can pose severe risks to human health, [pollinators, and other wildlife](#); some of these pesticides are also PFAS “Forever Chemicals.” Recent research on the effects of private mosquito sprays suggests these chemicals [often drift onto nearby properties](#), putting neighbors at risk. These treatments [are largely ineffective](#) at preventing insect-borne disease, with [little evidence](#) of risk reduction and only [short-term impacts](#) on mosquito populations. State action can help protect community health and limit harm from private pest control services.

Policy Options

Ensure Honest and Transparent Marketing

Private pest control services often use misleading claims that the products used are natural, safe, and non-toxic. In reality, the most commonly used synthetic pesticides are dangerous to people, pets, and wildlife, with possible links to [cancer and endocrine disruption](#). This false advertising has garnered [complaints to the Federal Trade Commission](#). To help reduce misinformation and promote healthier practices, states can:

- **Restrict the use of false claims** that synthetic pesticides are “natural,” “safe,” “non-toxic,” or “derived from natural ingredients.” All pesticides are toxic by design, and federal registration of pesticides is not a guarantee of safety. See California Food & Agriculture Code Section [§ 12992](#).
- **Ensure that sales staff are trained and knowledgeable** on pesticide products and risks, or restrict door-to-door sales by unlicensed persons. See Georgia Section [§ 43-45-24](#).
- **Ensure private spray companies provide consumers with the EPA pesticide label and/or safety data sheet** for all products and active ingredients purchased. See [Illinois HB 3118](#).
- **Require disclosure and owner consent** of [PFAS pesticide](#) use from servicers. See Massachusetts [H 4870](#).

Strengthen Notification and Re-Entry Requirements

Residues from private pesticide treatments frequently [move onto adjacent properties](#), putting neighbors at risk of exposure. Residues can last for days to weeks or longer after treatments. Legislation that addresses gaps in notification and re-entry requirements can help reduce harm from private pest control companies. States can:

- **Require pesticide applicators to notify properties** neighboring the treatment site 24-48 hours in advance. See New York’s [Neighbor Notification Law](#) (Sections 33-1004 & 33-1005) and Connecticut’s [Pre-Notification Program](#) (Section [§ 22a-66i](#)).
- **Ensure that pesticide applicators leave signage** where treatment has occurred. See Illinois [HB 3118](#) and New York’s [Neighbor Notification Law](#) (Sections 33-1004 & 33-1005).
- **Strengthen re-entry limits** post-treatment to prevent contact with pesticide residues. See [EPA Proposed Regulatory Changes](#).

Enact Restrictions on Private Pest Control

Private pest control services pose a risk to public and environmental health while providing [questionable relief](#) from vector-borne diseases. State-level policy can restrict these harmful practices through the following actions:

- **Ban the use of outdoor residential misting systems**. See Connecticut [SB 104](#) and Illinois [HB 3118](#).





- **Prohibit certain dates, seasons, or conditions** for private mosquito control. See Illinois [HB3118](#).
- **Require site inspections** to address mosquito breeding sources (i.e., standing water) and tick harborage before pesticide application is permitted. See Maryland [HB 1237](#).

Empower Communities to Address Private Pest Applications Through Local Control

Pest control companies' applications can move and contaminate neighboring yards, waterways, and the broader environment. [Local disputes arise](#) over this contamination, yet many [local communities do not have the authority to resolve these incidents or regulate pesticides](#). Local control allows communities to address these treatments without putting stress on limited state resources. States can:

- **Reverse agency preemption** of local pesticide regulation, and affirm that local entities can enact ordinances more stringent than state rules and regulations. See Maine [026-24-8](#).
- **Support agencies** in providing a pathway for local entities to amend pesticide rules and regulations for their municipality. See Louisiana [RS 3:3224](#).
- **Allow local restrictions in high-density areas** where drift causes conflict. See Pennsylvania [SB 228](#).
- **Permit pesticide restrictions** by local entities for safe drinking water. See Massachusetts [H 954](#).

Expand State Programs for Effective and Ecologically Responsible Mosquito Control

Controlling mosquitoes and the diseases they can transmit is most effective [at the community level](#). Local and state agency efforts to improve mosquito control practices help reduce biting mosquito populations, protect public health, and decrease demand for private pesticide applications. States can:

- **Expand government programs** to remove standing water and mosquito breeding habitats in public areas such as ditches and stormwater ponds. See California's [BMPs \(Enabled by Executive Order S-12-07\)](#).
- **Restore coastal waterways** and work to restore habitat for mosquito predators such as fish and aquatic invertebrates. See New Jersey's [Marsh Water Management Standards \(Section 26:9-12.3\)](#).
- **Discontinue the practice of using chemical pesticides** in response to resident complaints of "nuisance mosquitoes" if there is no evidence of disease risk. See Maine [§171](#).
- **Reserve the use of chemical larvicides and adulticides** for instances when there is demonstrated disease risk in an area in a given year. See Massachusetts [H 985/S 547](#).
- **Prohibit aerial spraying** for mosquitoes. See Massachusetts [H 985/S 547](#).

Other Resources

- [Pesticides Briefing Book](#) | NCEL
- [PFAS Fact Sheet](#) | NCEL
- [Pesticide Preemption & Local Control Fact Sheet](#) | Beyond Pesticides



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National Caucus of
Environmental Legislators

202.744.1006 • www.ncelenviro.org • 1140 3rd St NE, Office 2137 • Washington, DC 20002