

Legislative Watch: Protecting the "Toolbox" in Richmond

By: The VMCA Legislative Committee Chair Wes Robertson • 2026 Session Wrap-Up

As the 2026 Virginia General Assembly session comes to a close, the Legislative Committee has compiled this final wrap-up report. Our committee's primary role remains serving as the bridge between mosquito control professionals and our state legislators by tracking new bills, drafting advocacy letters, and providing science-based policy education. In accomplishing these things, we ensure that public health and our organizational priorities and concerns remain relevant in every environmental debate.

Our Post-Session Focus & Analysis

Chemical Bans & PFAS Requirements: Navigating the newly passed "PFAS-free" and monitoring mandates to assess their direct impact on pesticide formulations, container leaching, and storage infrastructure.

Invasive Species Monitoring: Tracking state positions and funding allocations to ensure local vector control districts retain full legislative authority to act swiftly against emerging species.

Inter-Committee Coordination: Continuing to work closely with the VMCA Board to keep the membership informed of these critical shifts in the regulatory landscape.

Final 2026 Session Summary

The overarching theme of the 2026 Virginia legislature was one of stricter environmental regulations and increased chemical transparency. Several major bills moved through the House and Senate that directly impact standard operating procedures for integrated mosquito management across the Commonwealth.

1. The Paraquat Ban (HB 1375)

STATUS: CONTINUED TO 2027 (POSTPONED)

The Update: The House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources officially voted to continue this bill into the 2027 regular session, deferring any immediate ban for the remainder of this year.

Why we are watching: This isn't just about Paraquat; it's about precedent. Industry advocates aggressively opposed the bill to defend the state's science-based regulatory framework. If passed in the future, Virginia would effectively override EPA federal designations, creating a "blueprint" for localized bans on mosquito control pesticides and potentially reducing the number of critical tools in our public health toolbox.

2. Neonicotinoid Restrictions (HB 2030)

STATUS: NO ACTION / MAINTAINED STATUS QUO

The Update: This legislative effort sought to prohibit aerosolized neonicotinoids in residentially zoned areas without providing a mandatory 24-hour notice to registered beehive owners. Ultimately, no sweeping restrictions or broad new definitions were enacted during this session.

The Concern: The committee remains highly vigilant regarding potential "chemical class overlap" in future rulemakings. If legislative definitions are written too broadly, they could inadvertently restrict or over-regulate common pyrethroid-based or neonicotinoid barrier sprays routinely utilized in integrated mosquito management.

3. PFAS Monitoring & Regulation (SB 138 & HB 880 / HB 1443)

STATUS: PASSED & SIGNED INTO LAW

The Update: A major package of environmental legislation targeting "forever chemicals" passed both chambers and was signed into law. This mandates the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to enforce strict quarterly PFAS monitoring for industrial discharges and prohibits the land application of biosolids exceeding 50 ppb of PFOA/PFOS.

The Mosquito Connection: Recent studies demonstrate that certain fluorinated high-density polyethylene (HDPE) storage containers can leach PFAS directly into pesticide formulations. With these rigorous testing protocols now legally active, public health districts may face heightened regulatory scrutiny and may eventually be forced to overhaul chemical storage methods or pivot to alternative, more expensive formulations to satisfy statewide purity standards.

Stay Informed & Next Steps

The VMCA Legislative Committee will continue to advocate for the science-based application of pesticides and the protection of public health. We encourage all members to remain engaged as we transition into the interim study period ahead of the 2027 legislative cycle.

Next Step: You can review full historical voting records and full-text substitutes for these bills on the Virginia Legislative Information System (LIS).