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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Largest City in Maine Joins City-Wide Shift to Organic Land Management

Washington, DC, January 4, 2018 - Joining the national movement to require organic land management of its public and private property, the City Council of Portland, Maine voted unanimously yesterday to restrict hazardous pesticides from its jurisdiction. The legislation is similar to an ordinance passed by the City of South Portland in 2016 and adopted by ballot initiative by the Town of Ogunquit, Maine in 2014. The law will take effect on July 1, 2018.

Outside of Maine, the City of Portland now joins other jurisdictions in the state of Maryland (Montgomery County and the City of Takoma Park), which have taken similar action. Twenty-eight jurisdictions throughout Maine have restricted pesticides in various ways, including on public property, but the comprehensive Portland-style ordinance stops virtually all hazardous pesticide use in the community, on private and public property.

Maine is one of **seven states** that has not, by state legislative action, taken away (or preempted) local authority to restrict pesticides more stringently than the state. However, the chemical industry is working to take away local authority in those states and last year tried unsuccessfully to push statewide preemption legislation in Maine.

Leading the effort in Portland is the group Portland Protectors, which led a 3-year effort to advance the new law. In support of the legislation, the Council received a letter from 31 medical and science professionals, who said, "As health professionals, it is our contention based on the molecular and microbiologic actions of these synthetic land care pesticides that the continued use of them must be challenged, banned, and replaced by practices and products that are not harmful to people and the environment."

"We are pleased by the City Council's action and ready to move forward with the transition to organic management of parks, playing fields, and home yards as part of a landmark program for a healthy Portland," said Avery Yale Kamila, co-founder of Portland Protectors (PP). "PP will stay active to help spread education and inspire the surrounding communities that have reached out wanting similar ordinances for their towns," said Maggie Knowles, co-founder of Portland Protectors.

The national organization Beyond Pesticides, with membership in Portland and throughout Maine, worked closely with Portland Protectors, a local coalition of individual volunteers, organizations and businesses, to help educate the public on the bill. The coalition works to prevent exposure to chemicals that run-off, drift, and volatilize from their application site,

causing involuntary poisoning of children and pets, polluting local water bodies, including Casco Bay, and widespread declines of honey bees and other wild pollinators.

“The legislation passed yesterday is a major victory for public health and environmental protection, and we look forward to assisting the city with the transition to organic land management,” said Jay Feldman, executive director of Beyond Pesticides.

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