FACTS-AT-A-GLANCE:
Intro 1524 Will Protect New York City Residents from Toxic Pesticides

Intro 1524, introduced by City Councilmember Ben Kallos, will safeguard New York City residents by eliminating the use of toxic pesticides on all NYC property. These protections are critical for vulnerable populations like children, elderly, and pregnant mothers. Those exposed to toxic pesticides in city parks as residents and as city workers managing sites are disproportionately people of color. While existing Local Law 37 made important progress in reducing some dangerous pesticides on the market, it continues to permit a range of synthetic chemicals linked to chronic health effects in people and population declines in wildlife like bees, butterflies, and birds. There is now greater understanding of pesticide dangers, and the healthy, sustainable practices and products that can successfully replace all toxic pesticide use. Intro 1524 restricts the use of toxic pesticides on NYC property in favor of materials regulated as organic or designated minimum risk—the least-toxic on the market. Intro 1524 is an opportunity to improve the health and safety of NYC workers, residents, and their pets, improve the city's air and water quality, protect threatened wildlife populations like pollinators, and fight the climate crisis.

Bring Intro 1524 to the floor for a vote by the City Council!

Background on Current Practices

- Local Law 37, passed in 2005, restricts the use of pesticides identified as carcinogenic or developmental toxicants, yet it continues to permit a range of synthetic chemicals that present hazards to human health and the environment.
- In 2018, there were over 284,000 applications of more than 156,000 lbs. of toxic pesticides to NYC properties. Each application puts both applicators and the public at risk.[1]
- Although the use of carcinogenic glyphosate has declined, it accounted for 41% of all liquid herbicide use in NYC in 2018. With continued use, Council action is needed to protect at-risk people and communities.

Improving Protections

- Intro 1524 brings NYC in line with the latest science on pest management, thereby eliminating the dangers that pesticides pose to residents.
- Intro 1524 will incentivize land and pest managers to embrace safer, cost-effective, organic methods of addressing insect and weed problems by focusing on prevention, rather than product use after pests have already become a problem.
  - A waiver provision will allow pesticide use only in emergency situations. This will ensure toxic pesticides are used only as a last resort when there is a threat to public health or it is required by state or federal law.

Addressing Long-standing, Disproportionate Harm to NYC Communities of Color

- *Poison Parks,* a report from NYC-based environmental justice organization The Black Institute, finds significant disparities regarding where pesticides are applied in the City, with low-income people of color communities at greatest risk.[2]

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- For low-income residents living in apartment complexes, public parks are often the only place to take children for play time. NYC school children use the parks for recreation. As the *Poison Parks* report explains, "Poisoning parks with toxic chemicals is yet another strike against the Black and Brown community. Enjoying a free, public space should not carry unexpected consequences."
- Glyphosate, identified as a carcinogen by international agencies, is sprayed at much higher rates in parks within communities of color. "A chemical that disproportionately impacts people of color is an act of environmental racism," finds the *Poison Parks* report. "When Black and Brown families that are economically disadvantaged must bear the burden of toxic exposure at a higher rate than white families, there is no argument that can change the racist nature of the subject."

Health Effects of Pesticides on Children

- In a landmark report, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) called for governments to reduce children's exposure to pesticides. AAP wrote that scientific evidence "…demonstrates associations between early life exposure to pesticides and pediatric cancers, decreased cognitive function, and behavioral problems."[3]
- Children take in more pesticides relative to their body weight than adults and have developing organ systems that are more vulnerable and less able to detoxify harmful chemicals.[4]
- Pesticides increase the risk of developing asthma, exacerbate a previous asthmatic condition, or even trigger asthma attacks in susceptible children.[5]

- Children with elevated levels of commonly used pyrethroid insecticides, applied to manage common pests, are more likely to have ADHD, and other behavioral issues.[6] Pyrethroids were applied roughly 100,000 times in NYC in 2018, accounting for 61% of all insecticide use.

Tracking State and Local Reform, and Legal Liability

- Over 150 communities throughout the United States have passed policies that restrict the use of toxic pesticides.[7]
- Major urban areas in the United States are increasingly passing laws that protect local residents in light of inaction by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Portland (Maine), Baltimore (Maryland), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), and Montgomery County (Maryland) have all enacted laws with criteria similar to the pesticide restrictions in Intro 1524 that allow the use of organic compatible products authorized by federal law.
- Increasingly, communities are looking to eliminate toxic pesticide use in light of recent court decisions and legal liability concerns regarding the herbicide glyphosate, including multimillion dollar awards resulting from a California school groundskeeper's cancer diagnosis.[8]
- Organic land management is an important piece of a city's environmental strategy to become carbon neutral, eliminating petroleum-based pesticides.

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[1] NYC Local Law 37. 2021. Pesticide Use by Agencies Report – 2018. https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/pesticide/pesticide-use-report2018.pdf.

[2] The Black Institute. 2020. Poison Parks. https://theblackinstitute.org/poisonparks/.

[3] American Academy of Pediatrics. 2012. *Pediatrics.* peds.2012-2757; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2012-2757 http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/11/21/peds.2012-2757.

[4] US EPA, Office of the Administrator, Environmental Health Threats to Children, EPA 175-F-96-001, September 1996. See also: http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/food/pest.htm.

[5] Hernández, AF., Parrón, T. and Alarcón, R. 2011. Pesticides and asthma. Curr Opin Allergy Clin Immunol.11(2):90-6.

[6] Oulhote, Y. and Bouchard, M. 2013. Urinary Metabolites of Organophosphate and Pyrethroid Pesticides and Behavioral Problems in Canadian Children. *Environmental Health Perspectives.* Vol. 121, No. 11-12 https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/ehp.1306667.

[7] Beyond Pesticides. 2019. Map of U.S. Pesticide Reform Policies. https://www.beyondpesticides.org/programs/lawns-and-landscapes/tools-for-change.

[8] Levin, S and Greenfield, P. 2018. Monsanto ordered to pay $289m as jury rules weedkiller caused man's cancer. *The Guardian.* https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/aug/10/monsanto-trial-cancer-dewayne-johnson-ruling.