



CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA

March 11, 2026

RE: HF3965 (Tabke)

Co-Chairs Hansen and Anderson, and members of the House Agriculture Committee,

Conservation Minnesota urges your support for HF3965 (Tabke), which would prohibit the sale and use of paraquat in the state. The negative health impacts of paraquat are widely recognized and understood, and its continued use poses a threat to our environment and human health.

According to the EPA, paraquat is one of the most highly toxic and dangerous pesticides still in use in the United States. Even slight exposure can be potentially fatal to humans, and smaller amounts can still have long-lasting health impacts. Some studies show an increased risk in Parkinson's Disease cases among populations who live or work near areas where paraquat is sprayed, meaning the risk is not only for immediate users, but for anyone in proximity.

Beyond this, paraquat also has long-term impacts on our soil and natural environment. Exposure can have ranging effects on crustaceans, fish, birds and other mammals. In some cases, these effects included increased mortality, decreased birth rates, and some of the same health risks to humans were seen in other animals as well. Research shows that paraquat can remain in soil particles from anywhere between three and six and a half years, prolonging its potential impacts on groundwater and the environment.

The impacts to human and environmental health have long been documented, and the health risks far outweigh the benefits of paraquat. Over 70 countries across the world have already banned paraquat, including much of the European Union and China. It is time for the United States to follow suit, and Minnesota can be a leader in this fight by passing this bill.

We strongly encourage you to support HF3965 (Tabke) and the end of paraquat use in Minnesota to protect our residents and our environment.

Sincerely,

Nels Paulsen

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March 11, 2026

To: MN House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

Re: HF 3965 – Opposed

Minnesota Crop Production Retailers (MCPR) is a statewide trade association representing the agricultural co-ops and ag retailers in Minnesota.

MCPR opposes HF 3965, and we continue to believe there is a solid use case for maintaining the availability of paraquat dichloride.

Paraquat is an effective herbicide used to control weeds across a wide range of crops, and it is particularly useful for hard-to-control weeds. Paraquat is also a useful tool for weed management and crop desiccation, as part of conservation tillage and no-till practices identified as key best management practices in Minnesota's Nutrient Reduction Strategy.

Paraquat has undergone extensive review by the EPA and is currently registered for use in Minnesota. It is a restricted-use product that requires the user to undergo additional training and have an applicator license.

MCPR supports the science-based approach to pesticide regulation. Our retailers and industry partners are well-positioned to provide our farmer customers with the agronomic advice, crop-protection tools, and operational support they need to produce their crops responsibly and efficiently.

Again, thank you for your thoughtful consideration and ongoing support for agriculture in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Lee Helgen, Executive Director
Minnesota Crop Production Retailers



Testimony in Support of HF 3965 (Tabke)

Anne Schechinger
Midwest Director
Minneapolis, MN
Environmental Working Group

March 9, 2026

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) thanks the Committee for welcoming public input on HF 3965. For the reasons detailed below, EWG supports HF 3965 and urges the Committee to take swift and decisive action to ban the use of paraquat.

No herbicide poses as many health risks for farmers, farmworkers, and people living near farms as paraquat. As renowned labor leader and civil rights activist Dolores Huerta recently testified, paraquat is “one of the greatest continuing threats to the health of farmworkers today.”¹

The use of the herbicide disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities, including environmental justice areas, likely leading to cumulative risk of harm.

Paraquat is extremely toxic to humans. Ingestion of even just a small amount can lead to death, and long-term exposure to paraquat has been linked to Parkinson’s disease and other health harms. And yet huge amounts are sprayed every year — farmers and farmworkers sprayed more than 10 million pounds in 2018 alone.²

The people most at risk of paraquat exposure include agricultural workers who mix, load, or apply the chemical, as well as people living in agricultural communities who could be exposed to pesticide drift in the air or dust. Agricultural workers are the most vulnerable to pesticide hazards and have the least ability to protect themselves.

The human cost of paraquat is severe. Peer-reviewed research shows that exposure to paraquat, particularly when sprayed within 500 meters of homes or workplaces, **more than doubles a person’s risk of developing Parkinson’s disease**³—a progressive, incurable neurological disorder that is on the rise. Even small, chronic exposures—through air drift or contaminated dust—can accumulate and pose significant health risks.

The connection between paraquat exposure and Parkinson’s disease is no longer speculative.

¹ *Hearing: Assembly Standing Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials*. (2024, April 23). Digital Democracy; CalMatters. digitaldemocracy.calmatters.org/hearings/257791

² *2019 Pesticide Use Maps*. (2019). Usgs.gov.

water.usgs.gov/nawqa/pnsp/usage/maps/show_map.php?year=2019&map=PARAQUAT&hilo=L&disp=Paraquat

³ See Tanner CM et al., *NIH study finds two pesticides associated with Parkinson’s disease*, National Institute of Health, (Friday, February 11, 2011) <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-study-finds-two-pesticides-associated-parkinsons-disease> (last visited May 9, 2025).



Rural residents who live near farms also face health threats from the use of paraquat. UCLA researchers found that paraquat sprayed within 500 meters of where people lived and worked could more than double a person's odds of developing Parkinson's over decades.⁴

Numerous scientific studies, including those supported by the National Institutes of Health, have established a clear and alarming link. Additionally, paraquat has been associated with **thyroid disease, kidney damage, childhood leukemia, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma**⁵—all of which place a significant burden on individuals, families, and our health care system. The largest paraquat maker, Syngenta, owned by SinoChem a Chinese state enterprise, has long understood paraquat's health risks but spent decades hiding these risks from the public and the U.S. EPA.⁶

Despite its toxicity, paraquat continues to be used in agriculture, using methods that heighten the risk of exposure, such as aerial spraying and ground application without buffer zones. Safer, effective weed management alternatives have long been available, and many farmers have already transitioned away from paraquat voluntarily. Banning its use in Minnesota would accelerate this shift and prioritize the health of rural residents, agricultural workers, and neighboring communities.

Notably, **over 70 countries have banned paraquat**,⁷ including China, Brazil, and the European Union. It is long past time for Minnesota to take similar action and ensure rural and agricultural communities are not exposed to a toxic chemical that so many other nations have deemed too dangerous to allow—including Switzerland, home to Syngenta and China, home to SinoChem. Syngenta recently announced its intention to phase out production in the UK. Other companies still manufacture paraquat in China, where its use and sale are banned.

The EPA has not done enough.

In January 2025, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) told a federal court⁸ that the agency wanted to withdraw a 2021 Interim Risk Decision (IRD), citing evidence that the IRD did not properly review the risks of Parkinson's. EPA cited the need to review new science submitted to the agency and require field studies of paraquat's volatility, which the Agency has stated is needed to “support a robust exposure and risk assessment addressing the potential

⁴ Paul, K., Cockburn, M., Gong, Y., Bronstein, J., & Ritz, B. (2024). Agricultural paraquat dichloride use and Parkinson's disease in California's Central Valley. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 53(1), dyae004. doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyae004

⁵ See INSERM Collective Expertise Center, *Effects of pesticides on health: New data*, Montrouge (FR): EDP Sciences (2022) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK581468/> (last visited May 9, 2025).

⁶ <https://www.thenewlede.org/2023/06/syngentas-swat-team-internal-files-reveal-secret-strategies-to-influence-science/>

⁷ Public Interest Research Group, *This toxic pesticide is banned in 70 countries, but still legal in America*, (Dec. 19, 2024) <https://pirg.org/articles/this-toxic-pesticide-is-banned-in-70-countries-but-still-legal-in-america/> (last visited May 9, 2025).

⁸ <https://www.thenewlede.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/EPA-motion-for-voluntary-remand.pdf>



volatilization of paraquat.” The court denied EPA’s request, ordered the case held in abeyance and required EPA to report back every 90 days on the Agency’s progress in filling these significant gaps.

EPA’s decision to withdraw its own interim determination demonstrates that it no longer regarded the 2021 conclusions as sufficiently reliable. Statements and conclusions in the 2021 decision were also withdrawn. EPA is now requiring paraquat registrants to provide additional data on the volatilization of paraquat,⁹ citing the potential for paraquat “concentrations of concern” to distances of 4,500 meters or 2.7 miles. This much higher potential for long-distance movement increases the risk to those living near a farm where paraquat is sprayed.

Any update by the EPA will be years away. It is critical that Minnesota helps lead the way in protecting the public from paraquat.

We urge you to support this critical legislation and help protect Minnesotans from needless and preventable harm.

⁹ <https://www.regulations.gov/document/EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0855-0554>



March 11, 2026

Representative Rick Hansen, Co-Chair
Representative Paul Anderson, Co-Chair
Minnesota House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee
Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Opposition to HF 3965 (Tabke)

Dear Co-Chairs Hansen and Anderson and members of the committee,

Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) is a nonpartisan, grassroots general farm organization representing over 30,000 farm and ranch families statewide. Thank you for the opportunity to express our opposition to HF 3965, which would ban the sale and use of paraquat dichloride in Minnesota.

MFBF strongly supports the safe, lawful, and responsible use of crop protection tools, including paraquat. These products are stringently regulated by the federal government under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA). Farmers prioritize the safety of their families, employees, consumers, and the environment, and they rely on the science-based review process at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate and provide safety guidance on pesticide use.

Paraquat is not a general-use product. It is federally classified as a restricted-use pesticide, meaning it may only be used by certified applicators. The EPA also requires paraquat-specific training in addition to standard applicator certification, as well as additional safety requirements including specialized labeling and closed-system packaging.

With these guidelines and regulations already in place, MFBF opposes additional state and local regulations that would prevent farmers from using a crop protection tool that has already been approved by the federal government. We respectfully oppose HF 3965 and urge the committee not to advance this legislation. If committee members have questions regarding MFBF's position, please contact Hunter Pederson, Public Policy Specialist, at hunter.pederson@fbmn.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Glessing'.

Dan Glessing, President
Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation