



Protect America's Children from Toxic Pesticides

Each year the United States uses over a billion pounds of pesticides — nearly a fifth of worldwide use.¹ Once they're approved pesticides often remain on the market for decades, even when scientific evidence overwhelmingly shows a pesticide is causing harm to people or the environment. In 2017 and 2018, the Environmental Protection Agency registered more than 100 pesticides containing ingredients widely considered to be dangerous.² Approximately one-third of annual U.S. pesticide use — over 300 million pounds from 85 different pesticides — comes from pesticides that are banned in the European Union. The pesticide regulation statute, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act of 1972 (“FIFRA”), contains many loopholes that put the interests of the pesticide industry above the health and safety of people and our environment.

The Protect America's Children from Toxic Pesticides Act of would provide desperately needed improvement to FIFRA that would better protect people and the environment from the harms caused by dangerous pesticides, including:

Bans some of the most damaging pesticides scientifically known to cause significant harm to people and the environment:

1. Organophosphate insecticides, which are designed to target the neurological system and have been linked to neurodevelopmental damage in children;³
2. Neonicotinoid insecticides, which have contributed to pollinator collapse around the world (the European Union and Canada have significantly restricted or banned their use to protect pollinators and other wildlife) and have recently been shown to cause developmental defects, heart deformations, and muscle tremors in unborn children;⁴
3. Paraquat, which is one of the most acutely toxic herbicides in the world —according to the EPA, just “one sip can kill.”⁵ Science has shown that chronic exposure to paraquat increases risk of developing Parkinson's disease by 200% to 600%. It is already banned in 32 countries, including the European Union.⁶

Restores balance to protect ordinary citizens by removing dangerous pesticides from the market by:

1. Creating a petition process to enable individual citizens to petition the EPA to identify dangerous pesticides so that the EPA would no longer be able to indefinitely allow dangerous pesticides to remain on the market;
2. Closing dangerous loopholes that have allowed the EPA to issue emergency exemptions and conditional registrations to use pesticides before they have gone through full health and safety review by the agency;
3. Enabling local communities to enact protective legislation and other policies without being vetoed or preempted by state law;
4. Suspending the use of pesticides deemed unsafe by the E.U. or Canada until they are thoroughly reviewed by the EPA.

Provides protections for frontline communities that bear the burden of pesticide exposure by:

1. Requiring employers of farmworkers to report all pesticide-caused injuries to the EPA, with strong penalties for failure to report injuries or retaliating against workers;
2. Directing the EPA to review pesticide injury reports and work with the pesticide manufacturers to develop better labeling to prevent future injury;
3. Requiring that all pesticide label instructions be written in Spanish and in any language spoken by more than 500 pesticide applicators.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2946087/pdf/nihms-232681.pdf>
- 2 https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/pesticides_reduction/pdfs/Toxic-Hangover.pdf
- 3 <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/ehp.1003183>; <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/ehp.1307044>;
<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/ehp.1003160>
- 4 <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/daniel-raichel/ten-things-you-always-wanted-know-about-neonics>
- 5 <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/paraquat-dichloride-one-sip-can-kill>
- 6 <https://www.michaeljfox.org/news/new-legislation-aims-ban-herbicide-linked-parkinsons>