



## Tell the Senate: The Pesticide Law Needs Real Reform

Environmentalists and public health advocates are calling for an aggressive program of policy change in 2022—change they say is critical to addressing existential crises of public health threats, biodiversity collapse, and severe climate disruption that is not being taken seriously by policy makers.

On November 23, 2021, Senator Cory Booker introduced legislation to eliminate many of the current problems with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), which regulates the registration and use of pesticides in the U.S. It corrects some of the worst mistakes in registering pesticides and removes some of the worst loopholes in the law. However, in order to prevent future pesticide problems, we need reform that goes deeper.

**>>Urge your Senators to co-sponsor PACTPA and reforms to the toxic core of FIFRA.**

Specifically, the bill, the Protect America's Children from Toxic Pesticides Act of 2021 (PACTPA), would provide some desperately needed improvements to FIFRA to better protect people and the environment, including:

1. Bans some of the most damaging pesticides scientifically known to cause significant harm to people and the environment:
  - Organophosphate insecticides, which are designed to target the neurological system and have been linked to [neurodevelopmental damage in children](#);
  - 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;
  - Paraquat, which is one of the most [acutely toxic herbicides](#) in the world—according to the EPA, just “one sip can kill.” Science has shown that chronic exposure to paraquat increases the risk of [developing](#)

[Parkinson's disease](#) by 200% to 600%. It is already banned in 32 countries, including the European Union.

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

- 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;
- 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;
- Enabling local communities to enact protective legislation and other policies without being vetoed or preempted by state law;
- Suspending the use of pesticides deemed unsafe by the E.U. or Canada until they are thoroughly reviewed by the EPA.

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

- 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;
- Directing the EPA to review pesticide injury reports and work with the pesticide manufacturers to develop better labeling to prevent future injury;
- Requiring that all pesticide label instructions be written in Spanish and in any language spoken by more than 500 pesticide applicators.

Despite this impressive list of corrections, PACTPA does not touch the toxic core of FIFRA, which permits the unnecessary dispersal of toxic chemicals in the environment. To eliminate this toxic core, Congress must:

1. Prohibit the registration and use of pesticides that do not meet these criteria:

- Necessary to prevent harm to humans and the environment based on an analysis of all alternatives;
- Cause no harm to humans and the environment; and
- Protect against the existential crises of biodiversity collapse, runaway climate change, and chronic and acute health threats.

2. Require all supporting data to be submitted and examined by the public before registration (including the elimination of conditional registration).

3. Deny and cancel all pesticide registrations not supported by studies demonstrating a lack of endocrine-disrupting effects.

4. Deny and cancel registrations of all pesticides posing a threat to [life in the soil](#)—and hence threatening the climate.

5. Deny and cancel registrations of all pesticides posing a threat to any endangered species.

>>Urge your Senators to co-sponsor PACTPA and reforms to the toxic core of FIFRA.

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