

# WSSA Announces Opposition to Weakening of FIFRA Regulations



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The Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) and its national and regional affiliates have joined with more than 300 agriculture and conservation organizations to protest legislation that would change our science-based pesticide laws.

Currently pesticides are regulated by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The law specifies that career scientists in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are responsible for determining whether a given pesticide is safe, whether it should be registered and how it should be used. Proposed bills introduced in the House (H.R. 7940) and the Senate (S. 4406) would put science in the backseat and let politics drive such decisions, WSSA says.

For example, the legislation would allow any interested person to submit a petition to designate an active ingredient or pesticide product as dangerous – regardless of the individual's background, motives or scientific data supporting its safe use.

In addition, any pesticide banned for use in the European Union or Canada for any reason would be immediately banned within the United States, even if extensive EPA scientific reviews have determined it is safe to use. The EPA's risk-benefit assessments are widely recognized as the "gold standard." In fact, many countries align with or defer to the EPA's regulatory decisions because of their scientific rigor. Yet the legislation would allow these science-based decisions to be overthrown by less comprehensive analyses.

WSSA says decades of federal regulation and scientific progress will be gutted if the legislation passes.

"These bills would significantly undermine the work of the EPA," says Lee Van Wychen, executive director of science policy for WSSA. "They would impose an unscientific and unbalanced process that would jeopardize the continued availability of herbicides and would deter companies from investing in new innovations. Ultimately, the United States could lose the pest control options we need to grow crops safely, protect our homes and infrastructure, control pathogens and diseases, and maintain parks, golf courses and natural areas."

A letter to members of the Senate and House of Representatives opposing this legislation (<http://wssa.net/wp-content/uploads/Neguse-Udall-FIFRA-letter.pdf>) was endorsed by WSSA, the Aquatic Plant Management Society, the North Central Weed Science Society, the Northeastern Weed Science Society, the Southern Weed

Science Society and the Western Society of Weed Science.

#### About the Weed Science Society of America

The Weed Science Society of America, a nonprofit scientific society, was founded in 1956 to encourage and promote the development of knowledge concerning weeds and their impact on the environment. The Society promotes research, education and extension outreach activities related to weeds, provides science-based information to the public and policy makers, fosters awareness of weeds and their impact on managed and natural ecosystems, and promotes cooperation among weed science organizations across the nation and around the world. For more information, visit <http://www.wssa.net>.

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