

PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES FROM HARMFUL PESTICIDES

The House Interior and Environment Appropriations bill for FY 2012 contains a rider added in full committee markup by Representative Ken Calvert (R-CA). This Anti-Wildlife, Pro-Poisons Rider largely eliminates the ability of the U.S. Endangered Species Act to protect listed species from the effects of harmful pesticides.

OUTDATED PESTICIDES: BAD FOR IMPERILED SPECIES, BAD FOR US

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that more than one billion tons of pesticides are used each year in the United States. U.S. Geologic Survey studies have consistently found high levels of pesticides in streams – sometimes at more than 1,000 times levels deemed safe for fish.
- These chemicals, which include broad spectrum killers dating back to World War II, seriously harm America's endangered species including salmon, frogs, birds, and sea turtles.
- Pesticides also threaten human health, especially the health of young children. For example a recent study has linked prenatal exposure to organophosphate pesticides to lower IQ. Many pesticides are also powerful endocrine disruptors that have developmental and reproductive effects in humans. Brain cancer and behavioral problems in children are also linked to worst-of-the-worst pesticides. While pesticides in our waterways and air affect everyone, farm workers and local communities are often at the greatest risk.



PESTICIDES AND THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

- The EPA is responsible for registering pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), and for setting labeling requirements for how registered pesticides may be used.
- Like all federal agencies, the EPA is required under the Endangered Species Act to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that its actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of threatened and endangered species. *Thus the EPA must consult with federal wildlife agencies to mitigate the harms that EPA-registered pesticides pose to listed species.*
- Unfortunately the EPA has a decades-long history of failing to consult with federal wildlife experts to avoid and minimize the harmful effects of registered pesticides. Thus pesticides – even worst-of-the-worst, outdated pesticides – are not currently regulated to properly protect imperiled wildlife.
- However the situation is looking up for ESA consultations on pesticides. Recently the EPA and the federal wildlife agencies requested a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) review to help resolve and reconcile internal agency differences. All parties seem to welcome that NAS process, but this process should not be used as a delay tactic to stall critical mitigation measures already prescribed by wildlife experts for particularly harmful pesticides.

ENDANGERED SPECIES AND PESTICIDES

EFFECTS OF THE ANTI-WILDLIFE, PRO-POISONS RIDER

- This rider to the House Interior and Environment appropriations bill for FY 2012 prohibits the EPA from spending any funds on implementing any measures recommended by federal wildlife experts to protect endangered species from pesticides. This spells disaster for species already on the brink of extinction because of pesticides and other threats.
- For example, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has found that the use of 24 particularly toxic pesticides and herbicides is harming listed Pacific salmon. NMFS has recommended reasonable mitigation measures such as no-spray buffer zones around waterways to protect endangered salmon from these particular poisons. This amendment would prevent the EPA from implementing any of NMFS's recommendations, further harming imperiled salmon, the commercially valuable Pacific salmon fishing industry, and human health. The amendment would also prohibit the EPA from taking steps required by federal wildlife experts to protect any other imperiled species from pesticides.

FIFRA: NOT ENOUGH TO PROTECT SPECIES FROM PESTICIDES

- Some claim that ESA consultations for pesticides are unnecessary because pesticides are registered under FIFRA. But FIFRA alone is not nearly enough to protect endangered species.
- In the FIFRA process, EPA does not adequately consider the real-world impacts of these pesticides to species already besieged by other threats; does not adequately consider the effects of multiple chemicals on the same species; and does not analyze pesticide mixtures. FIFRA has failed to prevent these poisons from entering the environment and harming wildlife. The United States Geological Survey has found pesticides in rivers and streams across the country. In many West Coast salmon streams, levels were 1,000 times the limit set to protect fish.



ALTERNATIVES TO OUTDATED, HARMFUL PESTICIDES ABOUND

- Already numerous alternatives to particularly harmful pesticides exist. Some farmers avoid the use of the most heavy-handed pesticides because they kill beneficial insects and can lead to increased pest problems over time.
- Claims that the no-spray buffers NMFS has recommended to protect salmon from particular pesticides would “fallow” that land are simply untrue. Less harmful pesticides or other effective pest management techniques can still be used in those areas.

**Please oppose efforts to put the interests of pesticide manufacturers ahead of human health and the health of our endangered species.
Please oppose the Anti-Wildlife, Pro-Poisons Rider.**

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