

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 20, 2009

The Honorable Lisa Jackson  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Administrator  
Ariel Rios Building, Mail Code: 1101A  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

Thank you for increasing transparency in the pesticide registration process and fostering public participation. As you are aware, when children are exposed to pesticides, they can suffer from a variety of adverse health effects including nervous system impairment, asthma, disruption of normal hormone functioning, developmental and reproductive disorders, and cancer. Studies show that organophosphates, carbamates, and other pesticides have contaminated the air in communities at levels that may be dangerous to children. As a result, we the undersigned, ask that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to take immediate steps to ensure that children are not harmed by pesticide drift.

In 1998, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) released a pivotal study on the heightened susceptibility of children to pesticides. That study warned that children are especially vulnerable to pesticides because of their growing bodies, the foods they eat, and the amount of time they play outside and come into contact with pesticide-laden surfaces. The study criticized EPA for treating children like “little adults” and recommended that EPA revamp its pesticide regulations to account for children’s vulnerabilities, consumption patterns, and “exposures from all sources – not just ingestion . . .”

In response to the NAS study, Congress unanimously passed the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) in 1996. The FQPA was designed to protect children from harmful pesticide exposures and requires EPA to ensure that there is a reasonable certainty that children will not be harmed by pesticide exposures. Under that law, EPA must calculate all the ways children

are exposed to a pesticide—through the foods they eat, the water they drink, and their indoor and outdoor activities—and ensure that those aggregate exposures are safe for children. Congress gave EPA an August 2006 deadline to bring all food-use pesticides into compliance with these protective mandates.

More than three years have passed since the FQPA deadline, and under the previous administration, the EPA failed to consider drift when assessing exposure to pesticides in the vast majority of cases. This failure is especially troublesome because EPA has acknowledged the dangers associated with pesticide drift. In 2001, EPA published a proposal for various measures the agency identified as necessary to protect the public and the environment from pesticide drift risks. Unfortunately, EPA never finalized that proposal and, over the last decade, has authorized hundreds of pesticides for agricultural uses without evaluating the risks that those chemicals pose to children when they drift from application sites into communities. The EPA's failure to protect children from harmful pesticide drift exposures violates the FQPA and continues to leave children at risk.

The EPA's failure to protect children from drift also violates the 1994 Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice and the 1997 Executive Order 13045 on Children's Health & Safety. Children are more susceptible to be harmed by pesticides than adults because they are still growing and developing, they consume more air, water, and food per pound than adults, and they engage in behaviors that increase their potential for exposure. The most severe pesticide drift impacts are borne by children living near agricultural sites, who tend to be from low-income families and communities of color.

Accordingly, we support the petition recently submitted by United Farm Workers, which calls on EPA to take common sense steps to protect children from pesticide drift. We specifically ask EPA to expeditiously evaluate the risks to children from pesticide drift exposures, and, while EPA completes those pesticide-specific evaluations, adopt no-spray buffers for drift-prone pesticides of at least 60 feet for ground applications and 300 feet for aerial applications from homes, schools, parks, day care centers, and other places where children may congregate.

We appreciate your consideration of this letter and look forward to your timely response.



Keith Ellison

Member of Congress



Raúl Grijalva

Member of Congress



Donna M. Christensen

Member of Congress



Steve Israel

Member of Congress



Jim Moran

Member of Congress



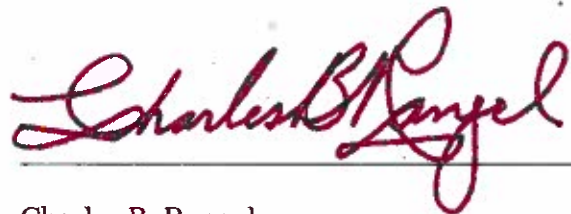
Bob Filner

Member of Congress



Adam Smith

Member of Congress



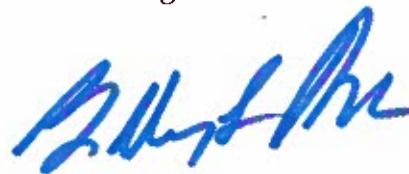
Charles B. Rangel

Member of Congress



John W. Olver

Member of Congress



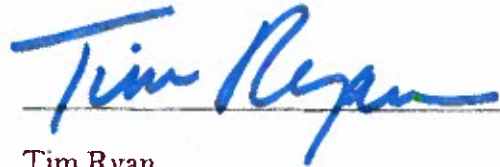
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Jesse L. Jackson Jr.

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Tim Ryan

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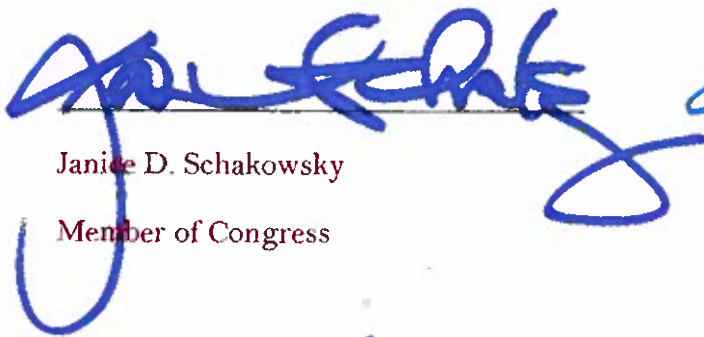
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*Barbara Lee*

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*Neil Abercrombie*

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