

Court to EPA: Chlorpyrifos ban is on!



As of Thursday morning, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has 60 days to finalize its ban of the neurotoxic pesticide chlorpyrifos.

This was the ruling of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on August 9. The judges determined that EPA broke the law by allowing continued use of the pesticide despite scientific evidence linking it to harmful impacts on children's developing brains.

"Children, farmworkers, rural families and science are all huge winners today," said PAN's executive director Kristin Schafer in a press statement responding to the court ruling. "Sadly, under this administration it takes judges to force our public agencies to stand up to corporate interests and do their jobs."

The decision was in response to years-long litigation brought by PAN, NRDC, Earthjustice and other farmworker and environmental health organizations.

Bad for children, farmworkers & families

[Chlorpyrifos](#) is a widely used and highly-volatile neurotoxic chemical that study after study has shown is harming the development of children's brains. When mothers are exposed during pregnancy, their children are at higher risk of having lower IQs, developmental delays and autism.

In fall 2016, EPA's own scientists published a follow-up assessment of health risks that found that, through their diet, infants were being exposed to the pesticide at levels 140 times what could be considered safe.

In the same assessment, the scientists also found that farmworkers were exposed at unsafe levels in the field — the chemical routinely sickens workers and sends them to the hospital.

A long time coming

EPA scientists put forward a proposal in late 2015 to withdraw all uses of chlorpyrifos on food crops. But in a controversial about-face in March 2017, former EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt called the science on chlorpyrifos "unresolved," and said agency experts will continue thinking about it until at least 2022. This announcement came just weeks after meeting with executives from Dow Agrochemical (now Corteva Agriscience), which makes the pesticide.

This win highlights the importance of the courts under an administration that is consistently prioritizing corporate interests over public health. In the months since Pruitt's reversal of the decision to ban chlorpyrifos, policy momentum at the state-level in the absence of national action has also been encouraging — Hawai'i recently banned the pesticide in the state, and California scientists recently listed it as an air contaminant and developmental toxicant.

EPA, the court has ruled. You have 60 days.

Aug 9, 2018
Pesticide Action Network

How are people exposed to chlorpyrifos?

People are exposed to chlorpyrifos through residues on food*, drinking water contamination, and toxic spray drift from pesticide applications. Farmworkers are exposed to it from mixing, handling, and applying the pesticide; as well as from entering fields where chlorpyrifos was recently sprayed. Residential uses of chlorpyrifos ended in 2000 after EPA found unacceptable risks to kids.

Children often experience greater exposure to chlorpyrifos and other pesticides because they frequently put their hands in their mouths and, relative to adults, they eat more fruits and vegetables, and drink more water and juice for their weight. – Earthjustice

* Chlorpyrifos is used in more than 50 fruit, nut, cereal and vegetable crops including apples, almonds, oranges and broccoli, with more than 640,000 acres treated in California alone in 2016, the most recent year data is available.