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Government
Advisory
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APR 29 2014

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The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

Environmental policies that promote a clean environment and healthy communities are a corporate and collaborative effort. As state, local and tribal officials, we serve in partnership with the EPA to protect our environment, and to meet the many complex environmental and public health challenges. As such, we are writing to support EPA's efforts to revise the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) to reduce the risk of exposure and injury to our farm workers and their families. The WPS aims to protect farm workers from harmful exposure to pesticides, and we support EPA's efforts to update the 1992 regulation. The LGAC has recommendations to further protect our farm workers and provide practical approaches.

We believe that farm workers deserve to have the same level of protection as other labor sectors in this country. The EPA estimates that approximately 5.1 billion pounds of pesticides are used annually in the U.S.¹, and in the U.S., there are approximately 1-2 million farm workers. Thousands of acute incidents are reported annually, and pesticide exposure results in many admitted cases to our local hospitals and clinics. Additionally, many of our hospitals and health care facilities/clinics face challenges in reporting and diagnosing these incidences. Even if clinicians are skilled to detect these symptoms there are few clinical tests to detect contamination further putting at risk families and children of farm workers.

LGAC Findings:

-The current Worker Protection Standard passed in 1992 is inadequate and provides only limited protection for farm workers.


¹ U.S. EPA. The EPA and Food Security, January, 2012, Fact Sheets at <http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/factsheets/security.htm>.

We all have at stake providing stronger governmental protections to protect our food supply and our workers who labor on our farms and ranches. As locally elected and appointed officials, we stand ready to assist the EPA in providing the intergovernmental partnership necessary to protect all of our citizens, no matter their occupation. The LGAC appreciates the EPA's efforts to seek stakeholder involvement in creating a workable set of revisions to the WPS.

Sincerely,



Mayor Bob Dixon
Chair, LGAC



Mayor Lisa Wong
Chairwoman, Environmental Justice
(EJ) Workgroup

Cc: Jim Jones, Assistant Administrator
Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention