

February 5, 2021

Office of Pesticide Programs
Docket number EPA-HQ-OPP-2008-0850
Environmental Protection Agency Docket Center (EPA/DC)
(28221T)
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW.
Washington, DC 20460-0001

Re: Comments on EPA proposed interim decision – Chlorpyrifos (Docket #: EPA-HQ-OPP-2008-0850)

Please accept the following comments on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity and Center for Food Safety in response to the Environmental Protection Agency's ("EPA") proposed interim registration decision for products containing a pesticide ingredient under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act ("FIFRA").

EPA has not met the substantial evidence or safety thresholds required for registration of chlorpyrifos under FIFRA and has still not complied with its duties under the Endangered Species Act ("ESA").

We ask the EPA to revoke all food tolerances of chlorpyrifos immediately and begin the cancellation process for all uses of chlorpyrifos.

EPA's proposed re-registration of chlorpyrifos violates FIFRA

The EPA must analyze the true costs of re-registering chlorpyrifos as outlined in the recent 9th Circuit Court of Appeals 2020 ruling on dicamba.¹ This includes harm to the environment and humans identified in EPA's risk assessments **and** the economic and social costs associated with registration – like water filtration, groundwater contamination, economic costs from human health harm, damage to the reputation of U.S.-produced agricultural goods, poison control center resources, societal impacts and loss of export markets to places where no (or a low) chlorpyrifos Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) is established.

¹ National Family Farming Coalition v. US EPA. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals opinion. Submitted with comments

Loss of Export Market Costs

Thailand has recently banned the use of chlorpyrifos and notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) that it will delete the MRL for chlorpyrifos in food commodities.^{2,3} This move was finalized by the Thailand Food and Drug Administration on November 2, 2020, and will prohibit import of food commodities that contain any residues of chlorpyrifos (effectively any crops that have been treated with chlorpyrifos) from the U.S. to Thailand beginning on Jun 1, 2021.⁴ This puts in place a zero-tolerance policy on any chlorpyrifos residue on a food commodity imported into the country.⁵ This could result in one of two things, either: 1) the complete loss of the U.S. export market of food commodities treated with chlorpyrifos with Thailand, or 2) the implementation of a two-tiered system to separate food treated with chlorpyrifos from food that was not treated with chlorpyrifos in order to retain the Thailand export market.⁶ Both have significant economic and logistical costs associated with them. And both are only necessary if the EPA re-registers chlorpyrifos. This is not simply a farmer's choice issue, whereby a farmer can decide whether to treat their crop with chlorpyrifos depending on whether they want it exported or not. Any farmer using chlorpyrifos on a commodity that may be exported to a place with a zero MRL in place puts at risk the entire market or can result in significant costs associated with separating commodities by chemical use.

The U.S.-Thailand export market for soybeans is estimated at \$524 million a year and wheat at \$162 million a year.^{7,8} Chlorpyrifos is used substantially in both crops in the U.S.⁹ and re-registration of chlorpyrifos could negatively affect or completely erase this lucrative export market. The USDA Foreign Agricultural Service estimated that Thailand's zero tolerance MRL

² World Trade Organization. Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. NOTIFICATION G/SPS/N/THA/313. 20 May 2020.

³ USDA. A Draft Notification of a Zero MRL for Residues of Paraquat and Chlorpyrifos. May 20,2020. Report Number: TH2020-0067. Available here: <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=A%20Draft%20Notification%20of%20a%20Zero%20MRL%20for%20Residues%20of%20Paraquat%20and%20Chlorpyrifos%20Bangkok%20Thailand%2005-20-2020>.

⁴ USDA. Thai FDA Announced Ban of Paraquat and Chlorpyrifos on Imported Food Products. November 03,2020. Report Number: TH2020-0151. Available here: <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Thai%20FDA%20Announced%20Ban%20of%20Paraquat%20and%20Chlorpyrifos%20on%20Imported%20Food%20Products%20Bangkok%20Thailand%2011-03-2020>.

⁵ U.S. International Trade Commission, *Global Economic Impact of Missing and Low Pesticide Maximum Residue Levels*, Vol. 1 (2020). Pg 187. Available here: <https://www.usitc.gov/publications/332/pub5071.pdf>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ USTR. Thailand. Available here: [https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/southeast-asia-pacific/thailand#:~:text=U.S.%20total%20exports%20of%20agricultural,distillers%20grains%20\(%24122%20million\)](https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/southeast-asia-pacific/thailand#:~:text=U.S.%20total%20exports%20of%20agricultural,distillers%20grains%20(%24122%20million)).

⁸ USDA – FAS. Thailand 2019 Export Highlights. Available here: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/thailand-2019-export-highlights#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20Thailand%20was%20the,by%20China%20with%2014%20percent>.

⁹ EPA. Chlorpyrifos National and State Summary Use and Usage Summary. April 1, 2020. Document ID EPA-HQ-OPP-2008-0850-0968.

for paraquat and chlorpyrifos would cost the U.S. economy \$0.9-1.1 billion per year.¹⁰ This indicates that the USDA FAS has identified a numerical value as to how much the continued registration of chlorpyrifos will cost the U.S. economy each year and that value is available to the EPA for use in its calculation of costs associated with chlorpyrifos.

This is, of course, not a necessary cost to the U.S. economy, but a cost that is only necessary if chlorpyrifos is re-registered and any domestic MRL retained. The EPA must account for the economic and societal costs associated with export of goods treated with chlorpyrifos before the agency can re-register chlorpyrifos. This is not unprecedented and is a reasonably foreseeable cost when using a pesticide that other countries have banned.¹¹ Again, this cost is 100% reliant on EPA's re-registering chlorpyrifos on food crops, because without chlorpyrifos re-registration it would not exist.

The agency's practice of allowing pesticides to be used in the U.S. that are banned in many other countries has consequences. The EPA has historically ignored those consequences in its cost-benefit analysis. This violates FIFRA. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision on dicamba¹² left no doubt as to the costs EPA must account for in its registration decisions. All costs associated with a pesticide's registration must be accounted for in determining whether no unreasonable adverse effects will occur. There is no mention of these costs in EPA's proposed re-registration decision.

This is just one example of an export market that could be negatively impacted by EPA's proposed decision and there are likely many more examples. Previously, France has banned import of sweet cherries from the U.S. for five straight years due to the use of another organophosphate, dimethoate, on those crops.¹³ Organic cherries are exempted from this ban.

¹⁰ USDA. Economic Impact of the Ban on Paraquat and Chlorpyrifos on Thai Industries. May 27,2020. Report Number: TH2020-0075. Available here: https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Economic%20Impact%20of%20the%20Ban%20on%20Paraquat%20and%20Chlorpyrifos%20on%20Thai%20Industries%20Bangkok%20Thailand_05-27-2020.

¹¹ USDA. France extends ban on US cherries over dimethoate use despite new EU rules. May 19,2020. Report Number: FR2020-0010. Available here: https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=France%20extends%20ban%20on%20US%20cherries%20over%20dimethoate%20use%20despite%20new%20EU%20rules_Paris_France_05-19-2020.

¹² National Family Farming Coalition v. US EPA. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals opinion. Submitted with comments.

¹³ USDA FAS. Global Agricultural Information Network Report. France extends ban on US cherries over dimethoate use despite new EU rules. May 19, 2020. Available here: https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=France%20extends%20ban%20on%20US%20cherries%20over%20dimethoate%20use%20despite%20new%20EU%20rules_Paris_France_05-19-2020.

This economic hit will likely increase as Italy, Spain and other European Union (EU) countries are considering a similar import ban on U.S. cherries.¹⁴

Not all countries are as regressive in their pesticide policy as the U.S., and that should be an important consideration in any decision regarding pesticide use in the country. In addition to banning dimethoate and certain imports treated with it, the EU took action to prohibit the use of chlorpyrifos in its 27 member countries in February of 2020.¹⁵ Beginning on August 6, 2020 COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) 2020/1085¹⁶ went into effect in the EU implementing a new rule that the MRL of chlorpyrifos allowed on imported foods be below the level of detection.¹⁷ This has established an EU MRL for chlorpyrifos in soybeans that is 3% of what it is in the U.S. (0.01 ppm in the EU compared to 0.3 ppm in the US).¹⁸ The EU MRL for sweet corn is 0.01 ppm compared to 0.05 ppm in the US, the EU MRL for onion bulbs is 0.01 ppm compared to 0.5 ppm in the US, the EU MRL for oranges is 0.01 ppm compared to 1 ppm in the US, the EU MRL for peaches is 0.01 ppm compared to 0.05 ppm in the US, and the EU MRL for wheat is 0.01 ppm compared to 0.5 ppm in the US.¹⁹

This does not mean that the U.S. cannot export soybeans or other food crops treated with chlorpyrifos to the EU, but that the US either has to: 1) test the export commodity to ensure chlorpyrifos levels fall below the EU's MRL before it is exported, or 2) run the risk of exported crops getting stalled at the foreign port if chlorpyrifos residues are too high. If the latter happens, the exporters may be fined and/or the food products may be refused – in which case the exporting party would bear the burden of lost revenue. Either way, the U.S. faces an economic and logistical cost when exporting soybeans and other commodities treated with chlorpyrifos to the EU and this must be factored into any agency action on chlorpyrifos. If EPA does not do this, the agency will not be basing its registration decision on substantial evidence and will not be able to conclude that chlorpyrifos will have no unreasonable adverse effects.

¹⁴ Northwest Horticultural Council. Northwest Horticultural Council Country Alerts. France Renews its Ban on Use of Dimethoate on Cherries. Available here: <https://nwhort.org/france-bans-use-of-dimethoate-on-cherries/>.

¹⁵ European Commission. Plants. Chlorpyrifos & Chlorpyrifos-methyl. Available here: https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/approval_active_substances/chlorpyrifos_chlorpyrifos-methyl_en.

¹⁶ Commission Regulation (EU) 2020/1085 of 23 July 2020 amending Annexes II and V to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards maximum residue levels for chlorpyrifos and chlorpyrifos-methyl in or on certain products (Text with EEA relevance). Available here: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32020R1085>.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ BCGlobal. Pesticide MRL database. Available here: <https://bcglobal.bryantchristie.com/db#pesticides/query>. Submitted with comments.

¹⁹ *Id.* Submitted with comments

Poison Control Center Resource Costs

Another cost the EPA has failed to account for is the resource utilization that chlorpyrifos demands from poison control centers across the country. Poison control centers are funded through a mix of federal, state and private funds, spending well over \$100 million each year by providing its services.²⁰ Roughly 2,000 incidents involving organophosphates like chlorpyrifos are reported to poison control centers each year. Many of these reports are of high severity, with organophosphates causing at least one death a year since 2016.^{21,22,23,24} These reported incidents provide a burden to poison control centers, as resources and personnel must be committed to effectively respond to these crises. These costs have not been accounted for in EPA's proposed re-registration of chlorpyrifos. Registering pesticides that are this harmful will always lead to accidents and lawful uses that result in harm to people, domesticated animals and wildlife. This is a cost that EPA has never accounted for in its cost-benefit analysis and the agency must start.

Conclusion

The agency must take into account all of the costs associated with chlorpyrifos use in the U.S. This includes, but is not limited to, negative effects on trade and resource utilization in pesticide control centers. FIFRA and recent case law in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals both compel EPA to do this. Further, EPA may not issue an interim registration decision for chlorpyrifos without first consulting with the Services or it will be in violation of the ESA. The EPA is in the process of doing this, but cannot make a final interim decision until reasonable and prudent measures and alternatives are implemented to protect listed species from harm.

Respectfully submitted,

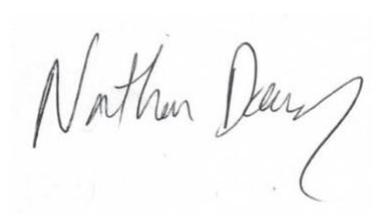
²⁰ The Lewin Group, Inc. Final Report on the Value of the Poison Center System. September 26, 2012. Available here: <https://www.webpoisoncontrol.org/~media/files/webpoisoncontrol/press-info/lewin-report-value-of-the-poison-center-system.pdf?la=en>.

²¹ Gummin, D. D., Mowry, J. B., Spyker, D. A., Brooks, D. E., Fraser, M. O., & Banner, W. (2017). 2016 annual report of the American Association of poison control centers' national poison data system (NPDS): 34th annual report. *Clinical Toxicology*, 55(10), 1072-1254. doi:10.1080/15563650.2017.1388087.

²² Gummin, D. D., Mowry, J. B., Spyker, D. A., Brooks, D. E., Osterthaler, K. M., & Banner, W. (2018). 2017 annual report of the American Association of poison control centers' national poison data system (NPDS): 35th annual report. *Clinical Toxicology*, 56(12), 1213-1415. doi:10.1080/15563650.2018.1533727.

²³ Gummin, D. D., Mowry, J. B., Spyker, D. A., Brooks, D. E., Beuhler, M. C., Rivers, L. J., ... Ryan, M. L. (2019). 2018 annual report of the American Association of poison control centers' national poison data system (NPDS): 36th annual report. *Clinical Toxicology*, 57(12), 1220-1413. doi:10.1080/15563650.2019.1677022.

²⁴ Gummin, D. D., Mowry, J. B., Beuhler, M. C., Spyker, D. A., Brooks, D. E., Dibert, K. W., ... Ryan, M. L. (2020). 2019 annual report of the American Association of poison control centers' national poison data system (NPDS): 37th annual report. *Clinical Toxicology*, 58(12), 1360-1541. doi:10.1080/15563650.2020.1834219.



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These comments are supported by the Center for Food Safety

Before the EPA can make a supportable decision to authorize products containing this pesticide, it must first accomplish all of the following:

1. Comply with duties under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA),²⁵ including completion of consultation.

As a separate, discretionary action that may affect endangered and threatened species, the EPA cannot register a pesticide prior to the completion of consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (“the Services”). Without such consultation, the EPA cannot satisfy its duty to insure that its action does not jeopardize the continued existence of imperiled species across the country or adversely modify or destroy their critical habitat. Moreover, unless and until the EPA completes ESA consultation, any taking of protected species from the use of this pesticide is unlawful.

Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (“ESA”) requires that “each federal agency *shall*, in consultation with and with the assistance of the Secretary, insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat of such species which is determined by the Secretary . . . to be critical.”²⁶ Under the Services’ joint regulations implementing the ESA, the EPA is required to review its actions “at the earliest possible time” to determine whether the action may affect listed species or critical

²⁵ 16 U.S.C. § 1536.

²⁶ 16 U.S.C. § 1536(a)(2) (emphasis added).

habitat.²⁷ Indeed, the EPA's recently finalized policy *Enhancing Stakeholder Input in the Pesticide Registration Review and ESA Consultation Processes* envisions informal consultations with the Services beginning at the preliminary risk assessment stage.²⁸ The EPA must initiate consultation under Section 7 whenever its action "may affect" a listed species or critical habitat.²⁹ The phrase "may affect" has been interpreted broadly to mean that "any possible effect, whether beneficial, benign, adverse, or of an undetermined character, triggers the formal consultation requirement."³⁰ Accordingly, the EPA must consult with the Services on its continuing and ongoing authority over this pesticide to satisfy its duty to insure that its use will not jeopardize or adversely modify protected species or their critical habitat well *before* it proposes a registration review decision. See *Endangered Species Act Consultation Obligations for Pesticide Approvals by the Environmental Protection Agency* (enclosed).

The EPA must consult on all synergistic and cumulative uses. The EPA must insure that all uses of this pesticide do not jeopardize species protected by the ESA or adversely modify or destroy their critical habitat, including uses with other ingredients or other pesticides. Absent information or data to determine whether this pesticide will act synergistically with other ingredients, such uncertainty requires that the EPA decline to re-register any end use products containing more than one active ingredient and prohibit tank mixing on the labels.

At a minimum, where a product may affect listed species, all product labels must contain the following language:

This product may have effects on federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat in some locations. When using this product, you must follow the measures contained in the Endangered Species Protection Bulletin for the county or parish in which you are applying the pesticide. To determine whether your county or parish has a Bulletin, and to obtain that Bulletin, consult <http://www.epa.gov/espp/>, or call 1-800-447-3813 no more than 6 months before using this product. Applicators must use Bulletins that are in effect in the month in which the pesticide will be applied. New Bulletins will generally be available from the above sources 6 months prior to their effective dates.³¹

2. Require that that the registrant provide all necessary data and studies.

²⁷ 50 C.F.R. § 402.14(a).

²⁸ http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/cb/csb_page/updates/2013/esa-regreview.html

²⁹ 50 C.F.R. § 402.14(a).

³⁰ *Western Watersheds Project v. Kraayenbrink*, 632 F.3d 472, 496 (9th Cir. 2011) (brackets omitted) (quoting 51 Fed. Reg. at 19,949). The threshold for triggering ESA consultation "is relatively low." *Lockyer v. U.S. Dep't of Agric.*, 575 F.3d 999, 1018 (9th Cir. 2009).

³¹ *Endangered Species Protection Program Field Implementation*, 70 Fed. Reg. 66392 (Nov. 2, 2005).

The EPA must have substantial evidence to re-register this pesticide. To do so, the EPA must require all necessary data and studies, including, but not limited to any previously identified data or study gaps, additional studies to evaluate effects on pollinators in accordance with the *Guidance for Assessing Pesticide Risks to Bees*,³² information concerning estrogen or other endocrine disruption effects,³³ and any information that this pesticide or products containing this pesticide may have synergistic effects.

This is information that the EPA must require from the applicant in the first instance pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 159.195(a), which require registrants to submit information that they reasonably should know that EPA might regard as raising concerns about the appropriate terms and conditions of registration of a product. The applicant may have information regarding synergy, whether in a U.S. Patent Application or as a result of its research and development. Failure to require any of the above information will result in the EPA underestimating adverse effects and lacking substantial evidence to support registration.

3. Incorporate necessary factors into evaluation and any proposed decision.

These factors should include the following, at a minimum:

- a. effects on species listed as protected under the ESA and their critical habitat,
- b. effects on pollinators and other beneficial insects, including indirect effects,
- c. effects on human health or environmental safety concerning endocrine disruption, and
- d. any additive, cumulative or synergistic effects of the use of this pesticide.

EPA cannot satisfy its legal duties unless it requires sufficient information and evaluates it for adverse effects before reaching any conclusions. Congress tasked the EPA with regulation of pesticides for safe use. FIFRA authorizes EPA to register a pesticide only upon determining that the pesticide “will perform its intended function without unreasonable adverse effects on the environment,” and that “when used in accordance with widespread and commonly recognized practice it will not generally cause unreasonable adverse effects on the environment.”³⁴ The statute defines “unreasonable adverse effects on the environment” to include “any unreasonable risk to man or the environment, taking into account the economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of the use of any pesticide.”³⁵ The EPA cannot meet this standard without requiring, evaluating and considering all information that causes adverse effects from the

³² EPA 2014. *Guidance for Assessing Pesticide Risks to Bees*. Available at https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-06/documents/pollinator_risk_assessment_guidance_06_19_14.pdf ³³ See 21 U.S.C. §§ 346a(d)(2)(A)(x) and 346a(p).

³⁴ 7 U.S.C. § 136a(c)(5)(C), (D); 40 C.F.R. § 152.112(e).

³⁵ 7 U.S.C. § 136(bb).

additional use of this pesticide. *Pollinator Stewardship Council v. U.S. E.P.A.*, Case No. 13-72346, Dkt. No. 58-1 at 6, 2015 WL 5255016, *1.

4. Place appropriate restrictions on uses to avoid and minimize adverse effects.

The EPA has broad authority to restrict uses and place strong mitigation language on labels to avoid adverse effects and when there is uncertainty.

5. The EPA must take into account real-world scenarios.

The EPA often claims that it is acting conservatively by using the maximum labeled use rates when estimating exposure to plants and animals. These upper-level exposure scenarios, however, do not take into account accidental spills and illegal uses of the pesticide. An assumption of 100 percent label compliance underestimates risk and is unsupported by state-collected data.³⁶

A recent survey of farmers in Missouri indicated that less than half -- only 43 percent -- actually read the label each time they use pesticides.³⁷ Sixteen percent only read the label half the time or less and 1.2 percent have never read the label at all. Pesticide labels also have wind speed requirements that are meant to reduce drift and are used in the EPA's risk assessment process to estimate off-site exposure. Four percent of pesticide applicators never checked the wind speed before application and 40 percent of applicators checked wind speed by looking at trees, a very unreliable form of measurement that is often inaccurate.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention studied acute injuries related to use of fogging insect killers in residential homes.³⁸ While the overall injury rate was low, there were many human health harms associated with the use of these products. More importantly, the CDC measured the number of injuries before and after a mandatory label change the EPA required in 2012 to address the many incidents reported with these products. The label change, which was designed to make the products safer to use, had no effect on the number of pesticide related injuries. This indicates that some users either did not read the label instructions or failed to follow them.

³⁶ Practical Farmers of Iowa. 2013. Summary of Public Record: IDALS Pesticide Bureau Case Files for Alleged Spray Drift to Organic, Fruits and Vegetables, and Horticulture. 2008-2012. Ames, IA. Available at: http://practicalfarmers.org/app/uploads/2014/01/IDALSsummary_1-14-14NN3.pdf.

³⁷ Randall. July 13th, 2016. State news. *57 percent of those applying pesticides in Missouri do not read label instructions*. Available at: <http://www.kttm.com/57-percent-of-those-applying-pesticides-in-missouri-do-not-read-label-instructions/>.

³⁸ Liu R, Alarcon WA, Calvert GM, et al. Acute Illnesses and Injuries Related to Total Release Foggers — 10 States, 2007–2015. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2018;67:125–130. Available here: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6704a4.htm?s_cid=mm6704a4_w

Therefore, the ever-present possibility of an accidental spill indicates that this is a reasonably foreseeable event that should be accounted for when estimating peak exposure concentrations. In addition, the data that are available on label compliance indicate that it is unreasonable to assume that pesticides are always applied in accordance with the label. We feel that when communicating findings to a risk manager, the EPA should no longer refer to its use of maximum labeled rates as “conservative” or accurately estimating peak exposures that may occur. And modeling off of maximum use rates should absolutely never be used to discount level of concern (“LOC”) or population adjusted dose (“PAD”) exceedances.

6. The EPA must assess the enhanced toxicity of pesticide mixtures.

The protocol that is currently being used to identify claims of synergy and place restrictions on pesticide use is a step above how the agency has utilized synergy data in the past, yet many steps in the process appear arbitrary and poorly executed. Therefore, we have outlined the steps that the EPA must take to ensure that its process for evaluating pesticide synergy is scientifically robust, defensible and compliant with FIFRA.

- 1) The EPA must request all data regarding the toxicity of mixtures containing the pesticide under consideration from the pesticide registrant/applicant, including all data on possible synergy. Pursuant to 40 CFR §159.195(a)(3), the registrant is required to submit information that indicates “[u]se of a pesticide may pose any greater risk than previously believed or reported to the Agency.” Any data on chemical synergy would certainly fall into that category.
- 2) Before any registration decision is made, the EPA must do a comprehensive patent application and literature search for any evidence or claims that the active ingredient under consideration produces any synergistic toxicities with any chemical with which it may be co-applied.
 - a) This includes patent applications or publications that find synergy with the active ingredient under consideration and any chemical that is not considered an active ingredient.
 - b) This includes studies from government or any non-industry researchers and patent applications that are assigned to entities other than the pesticide registrant.
 - c) This includes patent applications that have been approved, are still pending or have been denied.
 - d) This includes patent applications submitted to other countries or the World Intellectual Property Organization (“WIPO”).
- 3) The EPA should identify which patent applications or studies were analyzed for claims of synergy.

- 4) A synergy analysis needs to be performed for all new ingredient registrations, during significant new use registrations and during all registration reviews.
- 5) Tank mix prohibitions are not protective enough when evidence of synergy exists; prohibitions on “co-application in the same growing season” are needed to ensure no unreasonable adverse effects on the environment.
- 6) The EPA must analyze all data on pesticide synergy, including studies available from the peer-reviewed literature or state, federal or international governing body concerning the active ingredient under consideration with any ingredient it might be mixed with in a product or in the field.

For the reasons outlined above, in order to be compliant with FIFRA, the EPA must do an analysis of mixture toxicity with mixtures containing this active ingredient before any registration decision can be made. If the EPA does not think that it has the proper methodology in place to do this analysis, prohibiting the co-application of certain pesticides with this active ingredient is another way the EPA can ensure that any registration decision is compliant with FIFRA. Otherwise, the EPA will not be able to conclude that registration of this ingredient will not have unreasonable adverse effects on the environment.



ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT CONSULTATION OBLIGATIONS FOR PESTICIDE APPROVALS BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

I. EPA Has an Independent Duty Under the Endangered Species Act to Consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service on Pesticide Approvals.

Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA requires that “each federal agency *shall*, in consultation with and with the assistance of the Secretary, insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat of such species which is determined by the Secretary... to be critical.”³⁹ Under Section 7(a)(2), the EPA must consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (collectively the “Services”) to determine whether its actions will jeopardize listed species’ survival or adversely modify designated critical habitat, and if so, to identify ways to modify the action to avoid that result.⁴⁰ The consultation requirement applies to any discretionary agency action that may affect listed species.⁴¹ Because the EPA may decline to approve pesticides and uses, its decision represents a discretionary action that clearly falls within the ESA’s consultation requirement.⁴²

The EPA must initiate consultation under Section 7 whenever its action “may affect” a listed species or critical habitat.⁴³ Under the Services’ joint regulations implementing the ESA, the EPA is required to review its actions “at the earliest possible time” to determine whether the action may affect listed species or critical habitat.⁴⁴ Indeed, the EPA’s policy *Enhancing Stakeholder Input in the Pesticide Registration Review and ESA Consultation Processes* envisions informal consultations with the Services beginning at the preliminary risk assessment stage.⁴⁵ The Services define “may affect” as “the appropriate conclusion when a proposed action

³⁹ 16 U.S.C. § 1536(a)(2) (emphasis added).

⁴⁰ 50 C.F.R. § 402.14.

⁴¹ *National Association of Home Builders v. Defenders of Wildlife*, 551 U.S. 644 (2007).

⁴² See *Washington Toxics Coalition v. EPA*, 413 F. 3d 1024, 1032 (9th Cir. 2005) (“even though EPA registers pesticides under FIFRA, it must also comply with the ESA when threatened or endangered species are affected.”).

⁴³ 50 C.F.R. § 402.14(a).

⁴⁴ 50 C.F.R. § 402.14(a).

⁴⁵ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2013, Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention- Office of Pesticide Programs, *Enhancing Stakeholder Input in the Pesticide Registration Review and ESA Consultation Processes and Development of Economically and Technologically Feasible Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives*, Docket ID #: EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0442-0038 (March 19, 2013) at p. 8

may pose *any* effects on listed species or designated critical habitat.”⁴⁶ This inquiry even includes beneficial effects. The phrase “may affect” has been interpreted broadly to mean that “any possible effect, whether beneficial, benign, adverse, or of an undetermined character, triggers the formal consultation requirement.”⁴⁷ For this initial stage of review, exposure to a pesticide does not require that effects reach a pre-set level of significance or intensity to trigger the need to consult (e.g. effects do not need to trigger population-level responses). As the Services’ joint consultation handbook explains, an action agency such as the EPA may make a “no effect” determination, and thus avoid undertaking informal or formal consultations, only when “the action agency determines its proposed action will not affect listed species or critical habitat.”⁴⁸

Because the use of these pesticide formulations and products “may affect” listed species and “may affect” the critical habitat of listed species, the EPA must consult with the Services regarding its pesticide approvals in order to comply with the ESA.

Fortunately the National Academy of Sciences (“NAS”) has provided guidance regarding the obligations of EPA and other wildlife agencies in analyzing pesticide approvals under the ESA. The NAS committee provided a report to the EPA and Services in April of 2013 providing specific recommendations relating to the use of “best available data;” methods for evaluating sublethal, indirect, and cumulative effects; the state of the science regarding assessment of mixtures and pesticide inert ingredients; the development, application, and interpretation of results from predictive models; uncertainty factors; and what constitutes authoritative geospatial and temporal information for the assessment of individual species, habitat effects and probabilistic risk assessment methods.⁴⁹

While the NAS report outlines areas for all three agencies to improve, the NAS report made several significant conclusions about the current ecological risk assessment process and its use of risk quotients (“RQs”), including:

⁴⁶ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service 1998. *Endangered Species Consultation Handbook: Procedures for Conducting Consultation and Conference Activities Under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act* (hereafter CONSULTATION HANDBOOK) at xvi (emphasis in original).

⁴⁷ *Western Watersheds Project v. Kraayenbrink*, 632 F.3d 472, 496 (9th Cir. 2011) (brackets omitted) (quoting 51 Fed. Reg. at 19,949). The threshold for triggering ESA consultation “is relatively low.” *Lockyer v. U.S. Dep’t of Agric.*, 575 F.3d 999, 1018 (9th Cir. 2009).

⁴⁸ CONSULTATION HANDBOOK at 3-13.

⁴⁹ National Academy of Sciences 2013. *Assessing Risks to Endangered and Threatened Species from Pesticides* (hereafter NAS REPORT), Committee on Ecological Risk Assessment under FIFRA and ESA Board on Environmental Studies and Toxicology Division on Earth and Life Studies National Research Council (April 30, 2013).

- The EPA “concentration-ratio approach” for its ecological risk assessments “is ad hoc (although commonly used) and has unpredictable performance outcomes.”⁵⁰
- “RQs are not scientifically defensible for assessing the risks to listed species posed by pesticides or indeed for any application in which the desire is to base a decision on the probabilities of various possible outcomes.”⁵¹
- “The RQ approach does not estimate risk...but rather relies on there being a large margin between a point estimate that is derived to maximize a pesticide’s environmental concentration and a point estimate that is derived to minimize the concentration at which a specified adverse effect is not expected.”⁵²
- “Adding uncertainty factors to RQs to account for lack of data (on formulation toxicity, synergy, additivity, or any other aspect) is unwarranted because there is no way to determine whether the assumptions that are used overestimate or underestimate the probability of adverse effects.”⁵³

According to the NAS, the EPA concentration-ratio approach contrasts sharply with a probabilistic approach to assessing risk, which the NAS describes as “technically sound.” The NAS’s underlying conclusion is that EPA should move towards a probabilistic approach based on population modeling, an approach that the NMFS already utilizes.⁵⁴ The NAS also recommends that the FWS move towards a probabilistic approach in its consultations.

Following the publication of the NAS report, the agencies have developed two policy documents to guide consultations on pesticide review and approvals moving forward: (1) *Enhancing Stakeholder Input in the Pesticide Registration Review and ESA Consultation Processes*,⁵⁵ and (2) *Interim Approaches for National-level Pesticide Endangered Species Act Assessments Based on Recommendations of the National Academy of Science April 2013*.⁵⁶ The agencies made clear at a November 15, 2013 public meeting that these new procedures and approaches would be “day forward” in their implementation.⁵⁷ Accordingly, approvals of pesticides and uses *must* follow these new *Interim Approaches* and comply with the requirements of the ESA.

A. Completion of Step One under Interim Approaches

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 107.

⁵¹ *Id.* at 11.

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ *Id.* at 107.

⁵⁵ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2013, Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention- Office of Pesticide Programs, *Enhancing Stakeholder Input in the Pesticide Registration Review and ESA Consultation Processes and Development of Economically and Technologically Feasible Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives*, Docket ID #: EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0442-0038 (March 19, 2013).

⁵⁶ Available at <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-07/documents/interagency.pdf>

⁵⁷ INTERAGENCY APPROACH FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES REPORT: ASSESSING RISKS TO ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES FROM PESTICIDES, Public Meeting Silver Spring NOAA Auditorium (Nov. 15, 2013).

As laid out in the National Academy of Sciences and *Interim Approaches* guidance, the risk assessment and consultation process should follow three steps.⁵⁸ These steps generally follow the three inquiries of the ESA consultation process: (1) the “no effect”/ “may affect” determination (2) the “not likely to adversely affect”/ “likely to adversely affect” determination (3) the jeopardy/no jeopardy and adverse modification/no adverse modification of critical habitat determination. Step One generally follows the requirements of the ESA and will in most cases identify those species at risk from pesticides that need additional review through the informal and formal consultation process. At Step One, the EPA must gather sufficient data to complete the following two related inquiries: (1) the EPA must determine whether pesticide use areas will overlap with areas where listed species are present, including whether a use area overlaps with any listed species’ critical habitat (2) the EPA must determine whether off-site transport of pesticides will overlap with locations where listed species are present and/or critical habitat is designated. Off-site transport must include considerations of downstream transport due to runoff as well as downwind transport due to spray drift when the best available science indicates such transport is occurring.⁵⁹

What the EPA should do to meet the legal requirements of the ESA is use the best available spatial data regarding the pesticide use patterns and the distribution and range of listed species to determine whether a pesticide’s use overlaps with species, and then make a “may affect”/“no effect” determination. The Fish and Wildlife Service ECOS website provides GIS-based data layers for each listed species with designated critical habitat.⁶⁰ These maps are scalable and can achieve the precision needed to make accurate effects determinations regarding whether a pesticide will have “no effect” or “may affect” a listed species and are certainly accurate enough to make determinations as to whether the use of a pesticide represents adverse modification of critical habitat. Figure One provides an overlay map from ECOS of all critical habitat that has been designated for listed species thus far.

Other sources provide additional data on the distribution and life history of threatened and endangered species. NatureServe provides detailed life history information, including spatial distribution, for native species across the United States.⁶¹ In addition, many State governments

⁵⁸ NAS REPORT at 37-38.

⁵⁹ The Center acknowledges that in many areas, atmospheric transport is difficult to model and assess. However, in some areas, the impacts of atmospheric transport of pesticides are well understood. A recent study found that a variety of pesticides are accumulating in the Pacific chorus frogs (*Pseudacris regilla*) through atmospheric deposition at remote, high-elevation locations in the Sierra Nevada mountains, including in Giant Sequoia National Monument, Lassen Volcanic National Park, and Yosemite National Park Smalling, K.L., et al. 2013. *Accumulation of Pesticides in Pacific Chorus Frogs (Pseudacris regilla) from California’s Sierra Nevada Mountains*, *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry*, 32:2026–2034.

⁶⁰ US Fish and Wildlife Service Environmental Conservation Online System. <http://ecos.fws.gov>

⁶¹ NatureServe Get data. <http://www.natureserve.org/getData/index.jsp>

collect detailed information on non-game species through their State Wildlife Action Plans.⁶² In short, there are many sources of data that can provide EPA with the detailed information it needs to conduct an effects determination for each species. If there is a subset of species where it believes information is still lacking, EPA should make that clear to all stakeholders which species specifically it believes such data are lacking early in the process such that this information can be collected from the Services and other sources.

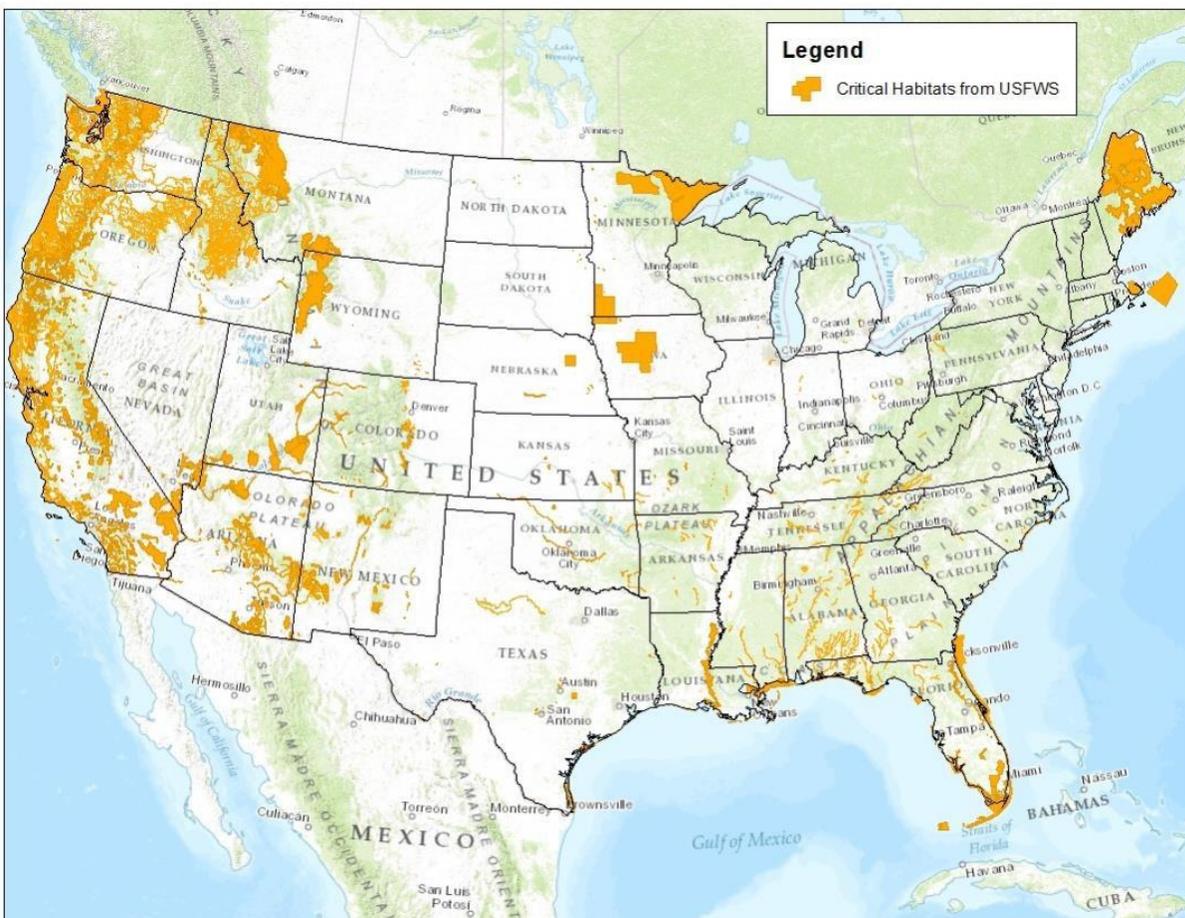
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⁶² State Wildlife Action Plans. <http://teaming.com/state-wildlife-action-plans-swaps>

Figure One – Base Composite Map of Critical Habitat in the United States⁶³



To make scientifically valid effects determinations, EPA will also need the best available spatial data regarding the use of pesticides. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Geological Survey⁶⁴ collect data on an enormous suite of pesticide active ingredients each year, as do several private organizations. Thus, it should be possible to determine where areas of geographic overlap between species and pesticide usage occur. If empirical data on pesticide use or persistence in the environment is lacking geospatial modeling can be used to determine where pesticide use may overlap with affected endangered species.

With the completion of the problem formulations for Ecological Risk, the EPA should now move quickly to begin the informal consultation process for pesticides, starting with a spatial analysis as envisioned as Step one. If this information is collected and assessed properly, then it should then be relatively straightforward for the EPA to begin to develop geographic restriction on the

⁶³ US Fish and Wildlife Service Environmental Conservation Online System. <http://ecos.fws.gov>

⁶⁴ USGS, National Water-Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program, Pesticide National Synthesis Project, Annual Pesticide Use Maps: 1992-2013, available at <https://water.usgs.gov/nawqa/pnsp/usage/maps/>

use of pesticides wherever designated critical habitat for a listed species exists as parts of Step Two and Step Three. However, because not all threatened and endangered species have critical habitat, the EPA will also have to collect data on the distribution and range of species that do not yet have critical habitat to determine whether the use of these pesticides will jeopardize any of those species.

B. Label Requirements.

FIFRA requires that the EPA evaluate and reregister a pesticide every 15 years. During that 15 year period, crop distributions change, use patterns for pesticides change, and listed species change. By the time the registration review process is complete several years from now, additional species will almost certainly be protected by the ESA. Of the species currently listed, some may move towards recovery and become more common while others may become even more imperiled.

Product labels must be able to adapt to changing conditions on the ground to ensure that the use of these pesticides do not cause unanticipated adverse impacts that result in levels of take not authorized through the Section 7 consultation process. Fortunately, the EPA has already developed a system that can address impacts to endangered species and that provides for geographically-targeted conservation measures on the ground through its *Bulletins Live! Two* website.⁶⁵ The Center recommends that whenever a pesticide may affect listed species, both as a precautionary matter and as a mechanism to implement any conservation measures that are implemented in the informal and formal consultation process, the EPA use the *Bulletins Live! Two* system to incorporate these measures. Accordingly, all product labels for pesticides affecting endangered species must contain the following language:

This product may have effects on federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat in some locations. When using this product, you must follow the measures contained in the Endangered Species Protection Bulletin for the county or parish in which you are applying the pesticide. To determine whether your county or parish has a Bulletin, and to obtain that Bulletin, consult <http://www.epa.gov/espp/>, or call 1-800-447-3813 no more than 6 months before using this product. Applicators must use Bulletins that are in effect in the month in which the pesticide will be applied. New Bulletins will generally be available from the above sources 6 months prior to their effective dates.⁶⁶

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⁶⁵ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Endangered Species Protection Bulletins. <http://www.epa.gov/espp/bulletins.htm>

⁶⁶ *Endangered Species Protection Program Field Implementation*, 70 Fed. Reg. 66392 (Nov. 2, 2005).

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II. The EPA Must Make Defensible “Not Likely to Adversely Affect” and “Likely to Adversely Affect” Determinations as a Prerequisite for Defensible “Jeopardy” and “No Jeopardy” Determinations.

At the informal consultation stage, the EPA must determine whether the use of a pesticide is either “not likely to adversely affect” (“NLAA”) a listed species or is “likely to adversely affect” (“LAA”) a listed species.⁶⁷ The Services define NLAA as “when effects on listed species are expected to be discountable, insignificant, or completely beneficial.” Discountable effects are those that are extremely unlikely to occur and that the Services would not be able to meaningfully measure, detect, or evaluate” because of their insignificance⁶⁸ In the context of pesticides, only if predicted negative effects are discountable or insignificant can the EPA avoid the need to enter formal consultations with the Services. This is *not* a high threshold. The EPA is not required to make a determination as to whether exposure to a pesticide results in population level changes in order to request formal consultations. The Center believes that the Step Two approach described is generally compatible with the mandates of the ESA regarding actions that may affect listed species. The one in a million mortality threshold for “likely to adversely affect” reflects the ESA’s and the Consultation Handbook’s requirements. The decision to consider 1) sublethal effects to species, 2) additive, synergistic and cumulative effects of all chemicals and non-chemical stressors present in the pesticide formulation, tank mixture, and the environment, 3) and the fate and action of pesticide degradates at Step Two is also consistent with the ESA’s requirements and represents an important change from the previous EPA approach, in which the EPA was making policy judgments at Step Two as to whether known, adverse, population-level impacts crossed a severity threshold to warrant consultations.

Finally, the Center notes that at Step Three, the formal consultation process, the EPA and Services must consider the environmental baseline as well as all cumulative effects when determining if the approval pesticides, formulations, or uses will jeopardize any threatened or endangered species. The Services define environmental baseline as “the past and present impacts of all Federal, State, or private actions and other human activities in an action area, the anticipated impacts of all proposed Federal projects in an action area that have already undergone formal or early section 7 consultation, and the impact of State or private actions that

⁶⁷ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service. 1998. *Endangered Species Consultation Handbook: Procedures for Conducting Consultation and Conference Activities Under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.* at 3-1.

⁶⁸ *Id.* at xv.

are contemporaneous with the consultation in process.”⁶⁹ Cumulative effects are defined as “those effects of future State or private activities, not involving Federal activities, that are reasonably certain to occur within the action area of the Federal action subject to consultation.”⁷⁰ Pesticide consultations must consider the interactions between the active ingredient under review and other pollutants in the present in the environment.

The Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 (“FQPA”) requires EPA to measure risk of a pesticide based on “... available information concerning the cumulative effects on infants and children of such residues and other substances that have a common mechanism of toxicity.” The EPA has interpreted this to mean that only pesticides with a common mechanism of action be assessed in a cumulative risk assessment. We strongly disagree with this interpretation. First, the term “other substances” can include chemicals other than pesticides and also stressors that are not chemicals, like radiation and climate change. The EPA itself defines cumulative risk as “the combined risks from aggregate exposures to multiple agents or stressors,” where agents or stressors can be chemicals or “may also be biological or physical agents or an activity that, directly or indirectly, alters or causes the loss of a necessity such as habitat.”⁷¹ Second, the term “common mechanism of toxicity” does not dictate that the EPA only consider agents or stressors with a common mechanism of action. The National Research Council has recommended that the EPA use the endpoint of common adverse outcome rather than common mechanism of action to group agents that could act cumulatively.⁷² As for how this relates to EPA’s duty under the ESA, cumulative risk in the ESA needs to be interpreted very broadly as this piece of legislation is a precautionary document meant to ensure that no harm comes to listed species. Although the EPA interprets the scope of cumulative risk assessments under FQPA to be limited to the common mechanism effect, **there is absolutely no such written or intended limit in the ESA.** The EPA needs to begin discussions on how it will test true cumulative risk, the way it is broadly defined in the ESA, because current metrics and protocols that measure cumulative risk under FQPA are inadequate for the EPA to meet its legal obligations under the ESA.

Pesticide and their residues and degradates do not occur in single exposure situations and many different mixtures of pesticides occur in water bodies at the same time.⁷³ The mixtures of these chemicals can combine to have additive or synergistic effects that are substantially more

⁶⁹ *Id.* at xiv.

⁷⁰ *Id.* at xiii.

⁷¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2003. Framework for Cumulative Risk Assessment. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, National Center for Environmental Assessment, Washington Office, Washington, DC, EPA/600/P-02/001F, 2003. Pg. xvii.

⁷² National Research Council (US) Committee on the Health Risks of Phthalates. Phthalates and Cumulative Risk Assessment: The Tasks Ahead. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2008. Page 4.

⁷³ NMFS 2011, *Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation Draft Biological Opinion for the Environmental Protection Agency’s Pesticide General Permit for Discharges from the Application of Pesticides* (hereafter Draft BiOp) at 118-119, lines 4209-31; Gilliom, R.J. et al. 2006. *Pesticides in the Nation’s Streams and Ground Water, 1992–2001—A Summary*, available at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2006/3028/>.

dangerous and increase the toxicity to wildlife.⁷⁴ Thus, to fully understand the ecological effects and adverse impacts, the EPA and the Services must consider the pesticide's use in the context of *current* water quality conditions nationwide. In particular, the use of pesticides in watersheds that contain threatened or endangered species and where water quality is already impaired could be particularly problematic. Therefore, the agencies must use the best available data to fully inform its ecological risk assessment by considering water quality.

In conclusion, the EPA should move quickly to assemble the needed spatial data to make an informed “no effect” or “may affect” finding for *each* listed species that will likely overlap with the use of these pesticides or come into contact with its environmental degradates. If there is overlap, EPA must at a minimum conclude that the use of these pesticides “may affect” listed species. Where this occurs, EPA has a choice—(1) the EPA can elect to complete an informal consultation through a biological assessment (also known as a biological evaluation), or (2) the EPA can undergo formal consultation with the Services. If EPA completes a biological assessment and implements geographically-tailored conservation measures through *Bulletins Live! Two*, it may be able to reach NLAA determinations via the informal consultation process and alleviate the need for formal consultations. In the alternative, the EPA can move directly to formal consultation after making “may affect” determinations for species where the impacts of pesticides are more complex and will take additional expertise to develop sufficient conservation measures. Cumulative effects need to be measured in Steps 2 and 3.

III. EPA and the Services Must Assess the Adverse Impacts on Critical Habitat.

Section 7 of the ESA prohibits agency actions that would result in the “destruction or adverse modification of [critical] habitat.”⁷⁵ This inquiry is separate and distinct from the question as to whether a pesticide approval will result in jeopardy to any listed species. A no jeopardy finding (or a Not Likely to Adversely Affect finding in an informal consultation) is *not* equivalent to a finding that critical habitat will not be adversely modified. While there is much overlap between these two categories (for example, as in *Tennessee Valley Authority v. Hill*⁷⁶ where the proposed agency action to build a dam would both destroy a species' habitat and kill individual members of the species in the same time) many agency actions do result in adverse modification to critical habitat without causing direct harms to species that do rise to the level of jeopardy.⁷⁷ Indeed, the ESA's prohibition on “destruction or adverse modification” of critical habitat does not contain any qualifying language suggesting that a certain species-viability threshold must be reached prior to the habitat modification prohibition coming into force.

⁷⁴ Draft BiOp at 127-129, lines 4471-4515; Gilliom, R.J. 2007. *Pesticides in the Nation's Streams and Ground Water*; Environmental Science and Technology, 413408–3414.

⁷⁵ 16 U.S.C. § 1536(a)(2).

⁷⁶ 437 U.S. 153 (1978)

⁷⁷ See Owen, D. 2012. *Critical Habitat and the Challenge of Regulating Small Harms*. Florida Law Review 64:141-199.

As three federal circuit courts have made abundantly clear, avoiding a species' immediate extinction is not the same as bringing about its recovery to the point where listing is no longer necessary to safeguard the species from ongoing and future threats. Therefore, Section 7 requires that critical habitat not be adversely modified in ways that would hamper the *recovery* of listed species.⁷⁸ These potent pesticides with known adverse ecological effects have the potential to adversely modify critical habitat by altering ecological community structures, impacting the prey base for listed species, and by other changes to the physical and biological features of critical habitat. Accordingly, the informal consultation must separately evaluate whether these pesticide products and formulations will adversely modify critical habitat regardless of whether these pesticide products jeopardize a particular listed species. For example, if plant communities alongside a water body that has been designated as critical habitat suffer increased mortality, and this then results in increased temperatures or increased sedimentation, that would represent adverse modification of critical habitat. Likewise, if pesticides are toxic to species lower in the food chain, and a threatened or endangered species feeds on those affected prey species, this impact to the food web would represent a clear example of adverse modification to critical habitat.

EPA's evaluation must address impacts to critical habitat even if the direct effects on listed species fall below the NLAA or jeopardy thresholds. The Center recommends that the EPA design conservation measures—and implement those measures using *Bulletins Live! Two*—specifically to protect critical habitat of listed species from exposure to pesticides, and where appropriate, prohibit its use altogether in critical habitat where necessary. Doing so would provide meaningful, on-the-ground protections for hundreds of listed species, and may in some cases, help the EPA and the Services then reach a defensible NLAA or “no jeopardy” opinion.

IV. EPA Has an Independent Duty Under the Endangered Species Act to Consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service on the Approval of All End-use Product Labels.

Just as the EPA must consult with the Services regarding the reregistration of an active pesticide ingredient, EPA must also consult with the Services regarding the registration or approval of end use and technical pesticide products. Such consultations must also occur at the earliest possible time to ensure that specific product formulations do not result in jeopardy for a listed species or adversely modify critical habitat.

⁷⁸ See *Gifford Pinchot Task Force v. FWS*, 378 F.3d 1059, 1069-71 (9th Cir. 2004) (finding a FWS regulation conflating the requirements of survival and recovery to be unlawful); see also *N.M. Cattle Growers Ass'n v. FWS*, 248 F.3d 1277, 1283 n.2 (10th Cir. 2001); *Sierra Club v. FWS*, 245 F.3d 434, 441-42 (5th Cir. 2001)

In addition, because end use formulations may result in mixes of the active ingredient with “other ingredients” before application, the EPA must consider during the consultation process the effects of these “inert” or “other” ingredients together with the active ingredient on listed species and set appropriate conservation restrictions accordingly. As noted in *Washington Toxics Coalition v. U.S. Dept. of Interior*, “other ingredients” within a pesticide end product may cause negative impact to listed species even if they are less toxic than the active ingredient being reviewed.⁷⁹ “Other ingredients,” such as emulsifiers, surfactants, anti-foaming ingredients, and fillers may harm listed species and adversely modify critical habitat. Many of the more than 4,000 potentially hazardous additives allowed for use as pesticide additives are environmental contaminants and toxins that are known neurotoxins and carcinogens.⁸⁰ The EPA has routinely failed to consult with the Services on the registration of “other ingredients,” potentially compounding harms to listed species by allowing such ingredients to be introduced widely into the environment. EPA must, as part of the consultation process, consider the range of potential impacts by using different concentrations and different formulations of the active ingredient, as well as the potential negative impacts of “other ingredients” used in end use products.

The National Academy of Science report recognized that without real-world considerations of where listed species are located, the relative conservation status of listed species, the environmental baseline, and the interaction of pesticides with other active ingredients, pesticide degradates, and other pollutants, the EPA risk assessment process will not be able to make meaningful predictions about which endangered species will be adversely affected. Until the EPA can conduct realistic assessments, it should take a precautionary approach and enter into formal consultations with the Services as outlined in the *Interim Approaches* document.

⁷⁹ 457 F. Supp. 2d 1158 (W.D. Wash 2006).

⁸⁰ Draft BiOp at 113, lines 4062-68; 120-121, lines 4262-308; 127, lines 4445-4455; Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, et al., Petition to Require Disclosure of Hazardous Inert Ingredients on Pesticide Product Labels. 2006. http://www.epa.gov/opprd001/inerts/petition_ncap.pdf.