



School Pesticide Monitor

A Bi-Monthly Bulletin on Pesticides and Alternatives
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School Environment Protection Act 2012 Introduced

In March, Rep. Rush Holt and colleagues introduced the *School Environment Protection Act of 2012* (SEPA), a bill to protect children from pesticides in schools and on school grounds. The legislation also bans the use of synthetic fertilizers.

The bill language is based on state school pest management laws. It also mirrors the structure of the *Organic Foods Production Act of 1990*, which established a national committee to oversee the program as

well as establish a list of pesticides allowed for use within the program.

SEPA was first introduced in November 1999 in both the U.S. Senate and House; and has been re-introduced every Congressional session since. A form of the bill has passed the U.S. Senate twice since then and, together with other legislation, indicates broad support for a national mandate to stop hazardous pesticide use in schools.

Take action: Ask your Member of

Congress to support SEPA: bit.ly/sepaAction.

Need for Federal Legislation

Beyond Pesticides believes that federal legislation is needed to ensure a healthy learning environment for all. Children need better protection from toxic chemical exposure while at school. Numerous scientific studies find that pesticides used in schools are linked to cancer, asthma and other health problems. A 2010

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Students Vote to Ban Triclosan on Campus

The University of Texas (UT) Student Government body unanimously passed a resolution in March to ban soap containing the toxic antibacterial chemical triclosan throughout campus. If the ban is accepted by the University administration, UT would be the first university in the country to take an official stance against one of the most prevalent and dangerous antibacterial products available.

Triclosan, which can be found in many personal care products, has been linked to numerous human and environmental health effects. Recently the Canadian government

declared triclosan as an environmental toxin, proposing regulations to restrict its use.

Robert Love, the Student Government representative and public affairs graduate student who initiated the ban, says that officials in several different campus purchasing departments are open to phasing out antibacterial soap.

For financial and environmental reasons, the University phased out the use of the triclosan-containing soap in restrooms across campus in 2008; however, it is still being used in other places on campus. Accord-

ing to a university spokeswoman, a campus-wide phase out would require an official decision.

“What we’re saying is we need an outright ban on campus, and we need to kind of make a bold statement,” said urban studies senior and SG representative John Lawler in a statement to *The Daily Texan*. “In a lot of places it’s not being banned; it’s not being considered a harmful chemical.”

Triclosan’s efficacy has been called out as a result of numerous studies, despite the fact that triclosan

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School Environment Protection Act Summary

- SEPA requires that all public schools adopt defined integrated pest management (IPM) programs for buildings that emphasize non-chemical pest management strategies and only use least-toxic pesticides as a last resort.
- Requires organic management of school grounds and playing fields, and prohibits synthetic fertilizers due to their adverse impact on healthy soils, plants, and turf, and associated environmental impacts.
- Least-toxic pesticides do not include: pesticides that are carcinogens, reproductive and developmental toxicants, nervous and immune system poisons, endocrine disruptors, or have data gaps or missing information on health effects, as well as outdoor pesticides that adversely affect wildlife, have high soil mobility, or are groundwater contaminants.
- The bill establishes a 12-member National School IPM Advisory Board that, with the help of a technical advisory panel, will develop school IPM standards and a list of allowable least-toxic pesticide products.
- It requires each state to develop its IPM plan as part of its existing state cooperative agreement with the U.S. EPA.
- A public health emergency provision allows the use of a pesticide, if warranted. In this case, notification of the pesticide application is required to be provided to all parents of students and school staff.

Triclosan

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is marketed as a germ-killing substance. To the contrary, there is evidence that the widespread use of antibacterial compounds promote the emergence of bacterial resistance, which may actually contribute to greater vulnerability to bacteria.

In a comment to *The Statesman* about the possibility of illness spreading on campus after antibacterial soap is phased out, Mr. Love said, "The science doesn't support that. The science shows that antibacterial soap is no more effective than regular soap and water ... outside of extreme conditions of disease."

Public Radio International's *Living on Earth* recently interviewed Beyond Pesticides' Research Associate Nichelle Harriott about the toxicity of triclosan. (listen to the show at

bit.ly/loeTriclosan) In 2004, Beyond Pesticides began voicing concern about the dangers of triclosan and in 2009 and 2010 submitted petitions to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which call for the removal of triclosan from consumer products.

Since then, many major companies are quietly and quickly removing triclosan from their products. After opening the petition for public comment in 2011, over 10,000 individuals told EPA via email and docketed comments to ban triclosan. Additionally, scores of public health and advocacy groups, local state departments of health and the environment, as well as municipal and national wastewater treatment agencies, also submitted comments requesting an end to triclosan in consumer products.

Follow the students of UT's lead

and encourage your school or community go triclosan-free! Urge your municipality, institution or company to adopt the model resolution that establishes a commitment to not procuring or using products containing triclosan. For more information, see our Ban Triclosan page: bit.ly/triclosanAction.

SEPA

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Harvard University study links everyday pesticide exposure to ADHD. While some states have taken limited action to protect children from pesticides in schools, these policies represent a patchwork of laws that are uneven and inadequate. SEPA would provide a minimum national standard to protect kids in their places of learning.

For more information on SEPA and what you can do, see www.beyondpesticides.org/schools/sepa.