

# Press Advisory

## Clean Water Action and Beyond Pesticides

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Contact: Jay Feldman, Beyond Pesticides, 202-543-5450

Paul Schwartz, CWA, 202-895-0420 x105

### Widespread Pesticide Poisoning of Water Focus of Landmark Government Study

Washington, DC, March 3, 2006 – Today, the U.S. Geological Survey released *Pesticides in the Nation's Streams and Ground Water, 1992-2001*, a ten-year survey of the contamination caused by pesticide use in agriculture and urbanized areas. Every year, nearly one billion pounds of pesticides, many of which are linked to cancer, birth defects, neurological disorders, and environmental impacts, are used in the U.S, much of it ending up in our nation's waterways. When pesticides are applied on fields, gardens, parks and lawns, a percentage of the chemicals end up running off the treated site. Studies of major rivers and streams find that 96% of all fish, 100% of all surface water samples and 33% of major aquifers contain one or more pesticides at detectable levels. As a result of pesticide contamination of streams, rivers, lakes and underground water supplies, drinking water is also widely contaminated.

“The data shows an urgent need to strengthen policies at all levels of government and curtail pesticide use,” said Jay Feldman, executive director of Beyond Pesticides, a national information and advocacy group.

“This report underscores the need to strengthen, not weaken, water quality protections from toxic pesticides that pollute rivers, streams, lakes and our underground water supplies,” said Paul Schwartz, National Policy Coordinator of Clean Water Action.

As the USGS report shows, pesticides and their degradates are getting into the drinking water sources for millions of Americans. These contaminants combine with disinfectants, such as chlorine, added by drinking water providers to kill dangerous viruses, bacteria and pathogens, and form disinfectant by-products that are associated with increases in birth defects and miscarriages.

“Drinking water providers,” said Schwartz, “are then faced with a dilemma about how to deal with the twin problem of killing dangerous bacteria while not increasing the chemical health risks for pregnant women and healthy infants.”

**“The toxic cocktail of pesticides in our drinking water can't be addressed by the chemical by chemical regulatory approach of government,” said XXXXXXXXXXXX. “Citizens can take action at the local level to reduce or eliminate pesticides in their own back yard, in their local parks and schools.”**

What: Congressional Briefing on Pesticides in the Nation's Streams and Ground Water, *cosponsored by the Water Environment Federation and the Environmental and Energy Institute in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey*

When: Friday, March 3, 2006, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Where: 2318 Rayburn House Office Building

**NOTE:** The USGS Circular and supporting materials will be available on the web (<http://water.usgs.gov/nawqa>, under "What's New") on March 3, 2006. The USGS Circular will be available in print in late March/early April. If you would like a copy of the report, please contact Pixie Hamilton ([pahamilt@usgs.gov](mailto:pahamilt@usgs.gov); (804)-261-2602).