

School Pesticide Monitor

A Bi-monthly Bulletin on Pesticides and Alternatives

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Beyond Pesticides / National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides
701 E Street, SE, Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20003 • 202-543-5450
info@beyondpesticides.org • www.beyondpesticides.org

ACTION NEEDED

School Environment Protection Act (SEPA) Passes in Senate Education Bill, Moves to Conference Committee ***House Republican Leadership and Bush Administration Oppose SEPA***

Now is the time to ask your member of Congress to sign on to one of two “Dear Colleague” letters in support of the *School Environment Protection Act (SEPA)* (S.AMDT.805) now circulating on Capitol Hill. **Don’t let the Republican Leadership in the House and the Bush Administration kill this legislation!** The letters, one Republican and one Democrat, ask the House Conferees on the Education Bill to accept the Senate-adopted SEPA provision in the Senate Education Bill without weakening amendments.

If your Representative is a Republican, ask him/her to sign on to a letter being circulated by Reps. Connie Morella (R-MD), Jim Ramstad (R-MN), Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), and Benjamin Gilman (R-NY). The “Dear Colleague” was sent to all Republican members of Congress on July 18 and asks members to contact Kate Dickens (202-225-5341) with Rep. Morella to sign on.

If your Representative is a Democrat, ask him/her to sign on to a letter

being circulated by Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ). The “Dear Colleague” was sent to all Democrat members of Congress on July 20 and asks members to contact Brian Branton (202-225-5801) with Rep. Holt to sign on.

IN ADDITION

If your Congress member is on the Education Conference Committee, please write them directly and ask them to support the Senate-adopted SEPA provision in the Education Bill.

Conferees include: **House of Representatives:** Boehner (R-8th OH), Miller (D-7th CA), Petri (R-6th WI), Roukema (R-5th NJ), McKeon (R-25th CA), Castle (R-At large DE), Graham (R-3rd SC), Hilleary (R-4th TN), Isakson (R-6th GA), Kildee (D-9th MI), Owens (D-11th NY), Mink (D-2nd HI), Andrews (D-1st NJ), and Roemer (D-3rd IN). **Senate:** Kennedy (D-MA), Dodd (D-CT), Harkin (D-IA), Mikulski (D-MD), Jeffords (I-VT), Bingaman (D-NM), Wellstone (D-MN), Murray (D-WA), Reed (D-RI), Edwards (D-NC), Clinton (D-NY), Lieberman (D-CT), Bayh (D-IN), Gregg (R-NH), Frist (R-TN), Enzi (R-WY), Hutchinson (R-AR), Warner (R-VA), Bond (R-MO), Roberts (R-KS), Collins (R-ME), Sessions (R-AL), DeWine (R-OH), Allard (R-CO) and Ensign (R-NV). *See sample letter below.*

Sample Letter to Education Conference Committee

(If your member of Congress is on the Conference Committee. See list above.)

Dear Education Conference Committee Member:

I am writing to request your support of amendment number 805 (S.AMDT. 805), the *School Environment Protection Act of 2001 (SEPA)*, as included in the *Better Education for Students and Teachers Act*, S.1. Your support of SEPA, as adopted by the Senate without weakening amendments, is critical to providing a safer, healthier learning environment for our children. SEPA is the result of a historic agreement between organizations

representing the environment, children and labor, and groups representing the chemical and pest management industries and agriculture.

SEPA provides basic levels of protection for children and school staff from the use of pesticides in public school buildings and on school grounds. The National Academy of Sciences and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) state that children are especially sensitive to pesticide exposures, as they take in more pesticides relative to their body weight than adults and have

developing organ systems that are less able to detoxify chemicals. Even low levels of pesticide exposure can cause serious adverse health effects.

The *School Environment Protection Act of 2001*: 1) Requires local educational agencies to implement a school pest management policy that considers sanitation, structural repair, and mechanical, biological, cultural and pesticide strategies that will minimize health and environmental risks, as developed by the state and approved by EPA; 2) Requires

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New School Pest Management Policy in Portland OR

The Portland, Oregon Public Schools (PPS) Board of Education unanimously approved a school pest management policy on May 21, 2001 that takes great steps in protecting children and school staff from pesticide exposure. While applauding the action, Portland Parents for Alternatives to Pesticides (PPAP) announced that more restrictive action is needed to protect against all high hazard pesticide use.

The policy requires the school district to: implement an integrated pest management (IPM) policy that reduces and, where feasible, eliminates pesticide use and seeks practical alternatives; prohibit the use of pesticides classified as known or likely carcinogens and the use of pesticides for aesthetic purposes; pre-notify the school community via notice and posting (exempting pest infestation that poses an imminent risk to students and staff); develop an annual report regarding pest management practices; and honor a school's request to designate part or all of the grounds as a pesticide-free zone, unless the health or safety of the community, or integrity of structures or grounds are threatened. *See policy at www.beyondpesticides.org.*

Sample Letter, *continued*

universal notification three times per year of school pesticide use (at the beginning of the school year, midyear, and once for summer session); 3) Provides parents and school staff with access to health and toxicity information of all pesticides used in the school; 4) Establishes a registry for parents and school staff who wish to receive 24-hour pre-notification of a pesticide application; 5) Provides information about the adverse health effects of the pesticides on the notice provided via the registry; 6) Requires signs to be posted 24 hours prior to pesticide application and remain posted for 24 hours; 7) Exempts antimicrobials, baits, gels and pastes from the notice via the registry and posting requirements; 9) Requires the area where a pesticide application is to take place be unoccupied; 10) Establishes a 24-hour reentry period for pesticide applications made via baseboard spraying, broadcast spraying, tenting or fogging, unless the label specifies a specific reentry interval; 11) Requires record keeping of pesticide use and disclosure of chemicals used; and 12) Does not preempt state or local school from adopting a policy that exceeds provisions of the act.

People have a right to know if pesticides are used. Thirty-one states have

taken some action to address pesticide use and provide protection in and around their schools. However, no one state law contains all the elements included in SEPA. Under existing laws, 16 states require notification be given to parents before a pesticide application is made to their child's school. This new legislation will bring the other 34 states up to this minimum and essential standard. Only seven states require schools to use a pest management system that considers a range of non-chemical methods. S. AMDT. 805 will require all schools to implement such pest management strategies.

Thank you for your help in moving this legislation to protect the health of children. Please support SEPA, as adopted by the Senate, without weakening amendments.

Sincerely,

Addresses to contact Congress:

The Honorable
[name of U.S. Representative]
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable
[name of U.S. Senator]
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

See www.beyondpesticides.org for complete bill analysis.