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Beyond Pesticides

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GOP Farm Bill Attacks Foundational Protections from Pesticides for Farmers, Consumers, and the Environment—Briefing

WASHINGTON, DC, February 17, 2026—Central to the [GOP Farm Bill](#), released by the chair of the House Agriculture Committee on February 13, is the overturning of three core safeguards that are seen as critical to the health of farmers, consumers and the environment—judicial review of chemical manufacturers’ failure to warn about pesticide hazards, the democratic right of local governments in coordination with states to protect residents from pesticide use, and local site-specific action to ensure the safety of air, water, and land from pesticides. Subtitle C, entitled Regulatory Reform, is a sweeping set of exemptions, waivers, and revocations that undermines 50 years of laws adopted by Congress to protect farmers, consumers, and the environment.

A mark-up of the Farm Bill is expected as early as February 23.

The Farm Bill text in three separate sections: (i) prohibits lawsuits by farmers and consumers harmed by pesticides for which manufacturers failed to provide complete safety warnings ([Section 10205](#)); (ii) takes away the authority of local governments to protect residents and the local environment from pesticide use ([Section 10206](#)), and; (iii) repeals requirements in numerous federal statutes to protect against local pesticide contamination that could affect waterways, drinking water, federal projects, endangered species, migratory birds, and toxic waste ([Section 10207](#)).

Beyond Pesticides is calling on the members of the Agriculture Committee to reject:

- 1. Chemical Company Immunity from Liability and Failure to Warn.** Prohibits lawsuits by farmers and consumers harmed by pesticides for which manufacturers failed to provide complete safety warnings. ([Section 10205](#))
- 2. Preemption of State and Local Authority.** Takes away the authority of local governments to protect residents and the local environment from pesticide use. ([Section 10206](#))
- 3. An Exemption of Pesticides from Reviews to Protect Water, Ecosystems, and Endangered Species.** Repeals requirements in numerous federal statutes to protect against local pesticide contamination that could affect waterways, drinking water, federal projects, endangered species, migratory birds, and toxic waste. ([Section 10207](#))

(more)

4. **Diminished Integrity of Review and Field Information on Pesticide Use.** Repeals Section 711 of the *Pesticide Registration Improvement Act of 2022*, which mandates that EPA complete initial registration reviews of pesticides by October 1, 2026, striking a blow to scientific integrity and the assurance that active ingredients are adequately assessed before being released onto the market. ([Section 10204](#))

Multiple Crop and Pesticide Use Survey. Discontinues surveys, which provide baseline information to communities and farmers to inform practices and outcomes. ([Section 10211](#))

5. **Limits on Opportunities for Growth of Organic Agriculture.** Fails to provide:
- Full funding for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program;
 - The collection and reporting of organic dairy data, which is essential to the viability of organic dairy producers;
 - Adequate resources for the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) to effectively oversee and enforce organic standards; and,
 - Increased investment in organic research to keep pace with the growth of the organic sector.

“Instead of destroying incentives to ensure corporate responsibility, Congress through the Farm Bill should be facilitating the transition to ecological-based practices, like federally defined organic methods, that address the existential health, biodiversity, and climate issues of our time,” said Jay Feldman, executive director of Beyond Pesticides.

“House Agriculture Committee Chairman G.T. Thompson’s Farm Bill approach to limiting local pesticide regulations not only undermines community protections, but also disregards the efforts of farmers dedicated to sustainable practices for the sake of public health,” said Vanessa Garcia Polanco, government relations director of the National Young Farmers Coalition. “We must support farmers who prioritize environmental health and well-being, ensuring they can continue to produce safe, nutritious healthy food for our communities,” she continued.

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Beyond Pesticides is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., which works with allies in protecting health and the environment with science, policy, and action to lead the transition to a world free of toxic pesticides. Learn more at <https://www.beyondpesticides.org/>.

Background

With the Farm Bill under consideration, the chemical industry is engaged in a multi-pronged attack on long-standing protections in federal law.

Failure to Warn (Re. [Section 10205](#)). Litigation has always been a tool for holding manufacturers accountable for the damages they cause, providing an important check on the marketing of products beyond baseline regulations issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The courts have ruled on the liability principle over the history of pesticide regulation. A 2005 Supreme Court decision, in [Bates v. Dow Agrosciences LLC | 544 U.S. 431, 2005](#), upheld the right of farmers in Texas, who followed the pesticide label and experienced crop loss, to sue for damages. The manufacturer argued

unsuccessfully that because it registered its product with EPA, the farmers were preempted from suing them. The principle supporting opposition to industry efforts to legislate immunity for manufacturers' failure to warn is similar. Those who suffer harm through no fault of their own must be able to sue for manufacturers' failure to provide a warning on the product label. Chemical manufacturers, led by Bayer/Monsanto, have been moving across the U.S. with state legislation to shield manufacturers from lawsuits by consumers and farmers who have been damaged by pesticides and not warned of hazards like cancer. Now, they are moving their chemical company immunity campaign to the U.S. Congress, and then the Supreme Court next month. This follows years of successful litigation against Monsanto and over \$10 billion in jury verdicts and settlements on adverse effects of the weed killer glyphosate/Roundup.

Preemption of State and Local Authority (Re. [Section 10206](#)). Beyond revoking this basic right to be warned of product hazards, the legislation preempts the authority of local governments to protect their residents from pesticide exposure, as determined by state governments (reversing a 1991 U.S. Supreme Court decision in [Wisconsin Pub. Intervenor v. Mortier | 501 U.S. 597, 1991](#)) ([Section 10206](#)). Historically, localities have exercised their democratic right to protect public health and safety where state and federal standards are not adequately protective of their residents. Local governments have exercised this right in many areas affecting the health of people and the environment, such as with smoking, recycling, dog waste, and other standards.

Exemption of Pesticides from Reviews to Protect Water, Ecosystems, and Endangered Species (Re. [Section 10207](#)). The bill exempts registered pesticides from further “permitting or approval requirements,” which could include permits to restrict pesticides under the *Clean Water Act*, requirements for an environmental impact statement under the *National Environmental Policy Act*, or meet review standards under the *Endangered Species Act*, *Migratory Bird Act*, and other statutes affecting pesticide storage, transportation, and toxic waste.

Transition to Organic

While seeking to retain these authorities and ensure accountability of harm and the right to protect communities from weak federal restrictions, there are opportunities in the Farm Bill to support the transition to organic land management. However, the crucial support needed to transition agricultural practices considered friendly to health, biodiversity, and climate has been overwritten by support for industrial chemical-intensive agriculture. Chemical-intensive agriculture is a significant contributor to [human illness](#), [environmental pollution](#), loss of [biodiversity](#), and global [climate change](#)—principally through its dependence on chemical pesticides and fertilizers. These negative impacts—as well as property and crop damage to neighbors caused by pesticide drift and runoff—are known as “externalities” because their costs are not borne by those who profit from the practices that cause them. Certified organic agriculture, on the other hand, is specifically required by the [Organic Foods Production Act](#) (OFPA) to eliminate those adverse effects. Thus, organic farmers internalize the costs of providing food without harm to people and the planet.