

April 26, 2023

Chairman Glenn Thompson
400 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Thompson and Chairwoman Stabenow,

On behalf of the undersigned city, county, and local government officials, we write to oppose federal pesticide preemption in the upcoming Farm Bill.

While we may have differing views on pesticides, we take very seriously our duty to protect our constituents. Federal pesticide preemption is a direct attack on this authority. This provision prohibits local governments from adopting pesticide laws that are more protective than federal rules. It overturns decades of precedent and Supreme Court rulings and could prevent local governments from tailoring laws to the specific needs of their communities.

As of 2023, nearly 200 communities across the country have passed policies to restrict the use of pesticides in response to emerging evidence about potential human and environmental impacts. The exact concerns differ by pesticide, but include links to cancer, developmental challenges, lower IQ, and delayed motor development. Many of these laws work to protect the most vulnerable among us, such as children, who take in more pesticides relative to their body weight than adults and have developing organ systems. Others focus on safeguarding precious water resources, or the protection of wildlife like declining pollinator species critical to our environment and food supply.

Local governments have responded to the scientific evidence, their residents' concerns, and their area's unique ecological conditions through prudent measures to reduce exposure to hazardous pesticides. This includes actions such as creating a list of approved or prohibited pesticides, restricting toxic pesticide use around parks and playgrounds, negotiating commodity contracts and service agreements that prevent suppliers from offering products that contain pesticides harmful to pollinators, and keeping habitat along rights-of-way and other areas of management property free of pesticides harmful to pollinators. In states that have passed preemption laws, local governments must bend over backward to pass local legislation that fits our community's needs. These restrictions keep us from doing our job as policymakers. We urge you not to strengthen these already harmful laws.

While not every city has taken these actions, we strongly support our right to do so and oppose forfeiting this right for the indefinite future. In fact, federal pesticide preemption undermines the key role that local governments play across the country. As local officials, we are highly attuned to the needs of our constituents and adept at calibrating our protections accordingly. Local governments are also nimbler than their state or federal counterparts and can quickly respond to emerging health hazards when federal protections may take years to achieve. It is critical that local governments have the ability to exercise their democratic rights in order to safeguard the health of their residents and the unique local environments they call home.

We urge you to oppose federal pesticide preemption in the Farm Bill to protect public health and the environment.

Sincerely,

Joy Lyndes, Councilmember, Encinitas, CA
Gayle McLaughlin, Councilmember, Richmond, CA
Eric Lucan, Mayor, Novato, CA
Eduardo Martinez, Vice Mayor, Richmond, CA
Claudia Jimenez, Councilmember, Richmond, CA
Dan Carson, Councilmember, Davis, CA
Chance Cutrano, Vice Mayor, Fairfax, CA
Jesse Arreguin, Mayor, City of Berkeley, CA
Tom Butt, Mayor, Richmond, CA
Victoria Fleming, Councilmember, Santa Rosa, CA
Alexis Fineman, Councilmember, San Anselmo, CA
Stephanie Hellman, Councilmember, Fairfax, CA
Chance Cutrano, Vice Mayor, Fairfax, CA
Yanely Martinez, Councilmember, Greenfield, CA
Kate Harrison, Councilmember, Berkeley, CA
Teresa Acosta, Councilmember, Carlsbad, CA
Chris Duncan, Mayor, San Clemente, CA
Bapu Vaitla, Councilmember, Davis, CA
Aaron Brockett, Mayor, Boulder, CO
Lauren Folkerts, Councilmember, Boulder, CO
Wendy G. Batteau, County Supervisor, Westport, CT
Lisa Shanahan, Councilmember, Norwalk, CT
Robert C. White, Jr., Councilmember, Washington, DC
Charles Allen, Councilmember, Washington, DC
Elissa Silverman, Councilmember, Washington, DC
Scott Galvin, Councilmember, North Miami, FL
Kassandra Timothe, Councilmember, North Miami, FL
Sally B. Philips, Mayor, South Miami, FL
Kelly Takaya King, Councilmember, Maui County, HI
Tamara Paltin, Councilmember, Maui County, HI
Daniel Biss, Mayor, Evanston, IL
Eleanor Revelle, Councilmember, Evanston, IL
Jonathan Nieuwsma, Councilmember, Evanston, IL
Clare Kelly, Councilmember, Evanston, IL
Zach Adamson, City Council Vice President, Indianapolis, IN
Ali Brown, Councilmember, Indianapolis, IN
Andreae Downs, Councilmember, Newton, MA
Victoria Danberg, Councilmember, Newton, MA

Judith Garber, Town Meeting Member, Arlington, MA
Elaine Crowder, Town Meeting Member, Arlington, MA
Lynette Culverhouse, Town Meeting Member, Arlington, MA
Anna Henkin, Town Meeting Member, Arlington, MA
Robin Bergman, Town Meeting Member, Arlington, MA
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Dannielle Glaros, Councilmember, Prince George's County, MD
Kacy Kostiuk, Councilmember, Takoma Park, MD
Kate Stewart, Mayor, Takoma Park, MD
Judith F. Davis, Councilmember, Greenbelt, MD
Jarrett K Smith, Councilmember, Takoma Park, MD
Talisha Searcy, Councilmember, Takoma Park, MD
Sharon Green Middleton, Councilmember, Baltimore City, MD
Edouard Haba, Councilmember, Hyattsville, MD
Deb Jung, Councilmember, Howard County, MD
Danny Schaible, Councilmember, Hyattsville, MD
Judith F. Davis, Councilmember, Greenbelt, MD
Mark Conway, Councilmember, Baltimore City, MD
Lisa Rodvien, Councilmember, Anne Arundel County, MD
Eric Boucher, Select Board Member, Rockport, ME
Alison McKellar, Selectboard Chair, Camden, ME
Jocelyn Leighton, Councilmember, South Portland, ME
Gil Harris, Selectperson, Limerick, ME
Marion Greene, County Commissioner, Hennepin County, MN
Nelsie Yang, Councilmember, Saint Paul, MN
Margaret Rog, Councilmember, St Louis Park, MN
Tim Brausen, Councilmember, Saint Louis Park, MN
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Larry Kraft, Councilmember, St. Louis Park, MN
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Bob Russo, Councilmember, Montclair, NJ
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Renee Villarreal, Councilmember, Santa Fe, NM
Laura Petit, Legislator, Ulster County, NY
Phil Erner, County Legislator, Kingston, Ulster County, NY
Maureen O'Reilly Cunningham, Town Board Member, Bethlehem, NY
Matthew Miller, County Legislator, Albany County, NY
Harriet Cornell, County Legislator, West Nyack, NY
Raymond Joyce, County Legislator, Albany County, NY
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Maureen Cunningham, Councilmember, Bethlehem, NY
Sarah Bauer, Mayor, Larchmont, NY
Sam Fein, County Legislator, Albany County, NY
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Alan Jaques, County Board Supervisor, Douglas County, WI
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Marquise Slay, County Supervisor, Douglas County, WI