



May 23, 2023

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chair  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition &  
Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition &  
Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson  
Chair  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Scott  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Scott:

As you work to craft the 2023 Farm Bill, we appreciate the opportunity to share with you the Pesticide Policy Coalition’s priorities for the bill.

The PPC is an organization of agriculture, food, fiber, public health, pest management, landscape, environmental, and related industries, including small businesses and state departments of agriculture, who support sound science and the risk-based regulation of pesticides. PPC members include nationwide and regional farm, commodity, specialty crop, and silviculture organizations; cooperatives; food processors and marketers; pesticide manufacturers, formulators, and distributors; pest and vector-control applicators and operators; research organizations; equipment manufacturers and other interested stakeholders which are dependent on the availability of pesticides. As a unifying voice of the broad pesticide industry, the PPC serves as a forum for the review, discussion, and advocacy around pest management regulation and policy.

Farmers, ranchers, public health officials, professional pest control applicators and consumers use pesticides to safely grow crops, to adopt conservation practices such as conservation tillage and resource-saving crop rotations, to protect homes and infrastructure, to control pathogens and disease vectors, and to maintain green spaces, such as parks and golf courses. PPC members

confront increasing pest pressure and disease threats introduced into the United States via weather, trade, and other factors. As such, the PPC recommends that the 2023 Farm Bill include provisions to support and enhance the work of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP) and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Interagency Work Group (IWG), affirm the role of U.S. EPA (EPA) and state lead agencies in regulating pesticides, preserve export markets for U.S. agricultural products and support research, precision agriculture and conservation measures that allow growers and other users to more efficiently use pesticides. The PPC's farm bill priorities, many of which build off of provisions in the 2018 Farm Bill, are outlined below (note: order of provisions does not indicate order of importance).

**Enhance the Role of USDA's Office of Pest Management Policy** – In addition to coordinating USDA pest management and pesticide regulatory policy, OPMP works with the EPA on registration of new active ingredients and pesticide registration review, ensuring that the needs of pesticide users are represented. The PPC recommends that the Farm bill strengthen OPMP and EPA coordination, especially OPMP's role in quantifying the risk and benefits to pesticides.

**Support and Enhance the Role of the FIFRA Interagency Work Group** – The 2018 Farm Bill created an interagency workgroup that includes representation from EPA, USDA, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, Department of Commerce, and Department of the Interior to make recommendations and implement improvements to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) section 7 consultation process for pesticide registration and registration review. The IWG has made progress since the enactment of the 2018 Farm Bill, but its work must continue. The PPC supports extending and updating the charge of the IWG.

**Support the Use of Adjuvants** – Adjuvants increase pesticide efficacy and use-efficiency, decrease impacts to non-target species, and are an important conservation practice. The PPC supports policies that recognize the conservation benefits of adjuvants and encourage expanded use.

**Reaffirm State Pesticide Preemption and the Role of States as Co-Regulators of Pesticides** - Since the 1970s, state lead agencies have worked with the EPA through cooperative agreements to administer and enforce FIFRA laws and support the development of scientifically based pesticide labels. The PPC supports including language in the 2023 Farm Bill codifying oversight of pesticides at the state level. Although 46 states have adopted some form of pesticide preemption, some local jurisdictions continue to promote pesticide ordinances that differ from state requirements, creating a confusing patchwork of regulation and jeopardizing the public health and protection of the food supply. Municipalities cannot replicate the state lead agency's high standard of expertise, effective regulation, vast resources, and safety. Language affirming the state lead agency role in pesticide regulation was included in the House-passed version of the 2018 and re-introduced as HR 7266 in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

**Promote Uniformity in Pesticide Labeling by Reaffirming that EPA is the Primary, Federal Authority under FIFRA for Making Pesticide Findings and Decisions.** –The PPC

recommends that the Farm Bill reinforce and strengthen federal preemption regarding human health and other risk assessments under FIFRA on federal pesticide labels. As co-regulators of pesticides, States have every right to build on the federal government’s baseline regulations but should not require additional labeling or packaging requirements that directly contradict the scientific conclusions of the EPA.

**Support Voluntary Adoption of Precision Agriculture Technologies and Services** - Precision

agricultural equipment, technology and practices enhance efficient agricultural practices and production. Precision agriculture practices increase yields, while reducing the use of inputs such as feed, fertilizer, agricultural chemicals, water, and time. Technologies that enhance the efficient use of these inputs include but are not limited to GPS enabled devices including autosteer and auto guidance, variable application rate technology, telematics and fleet analytics, satellite mapping and imagery, yield monitors, soil mapping, sensors to gather crop, soil moisture or livestock data, software and advanced analytics, and precision irrigation. The PPC supports policies that encourage the voluntary adoption of precision agriculture that support production and conservation.

**Support USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service’s Engagement in International Institutions, Especially Related to Codex and Pesticide Standards.** –International institutions, standards,

guidance, and rules provide the legal basis for much of global agricultural trade, but foreign governments increasingly ignore the standards, jettisoning science- and risk-based approaches. USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service engagement strengthens these international institutions and preserves their appropriate functions. The PPC supports the work of the FAS, along with resources to support that engagement, especially related to Codex and pesticide issues.

**Eliminate Duplicative and Burdensome Permits for Pesticide Applications** –Since October 31, 2011, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits are required for pesticide applications “to, over, or near” water. Congress and EPA never intended to regulate pesticide applications with Clean Water Act (CWA) NPDES permits. EPA and states put the new requirements into place in order to comply with a court order in *National Cotton Council v. EPA*. Requiring NPDES permits is duplicative of the long-standing FIFRA-based regulatory process. These permits cost small businesses, cities, counties, and states significant resources and jobs and diminish public health protections. The FIFRA scientific and safety requirements for aquatic and other applications covered by the permit are already scientifically rigorous and comprehensive. When EPA has concluded that a registered pesticide satisfies FIFRA and will not have an “unreasonable adverse effect on the environment,” then the application of that pesticide should be excluded from the permitting requirements of the CWA. Language to eliminate these duplicative permits was included in the House-passed version of the 2018 Farm Bill.

Thank you for consideration of these comments. The PPC looks forward to scheduling time to meet with your offices to discuss these priority issues in greater details. In the meantime, if you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [shensley@cotton.org](mailto:shensley@cotton.org) or (703) 475-7716.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Hensley".

Steve Hensley  
Chair, Pesticide Policy Coalition

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy S. Browne".

Peggy Browne  
Vice Chair, Pesticide Policy Coalition