



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAY 20 2014

The Honorable James P. Moran
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

OFFICE OF CHEMICAL SAFETY
AND POLLUTION PREVENTION

Dear Congressman Moran:

Thank you for your letter of March 25, 2014, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator regarding pyridine herbicide residues in compost. I am happy to respond on behalf of the EPA because my office is responsible for regulating pesticides.

We share your concern regarding the possibility that residues of the pyridine class of herbicides may persist in compost and manure and can damage plants when the compost or manure is used. This is a significant issue for the agency and, along with our stakeholders, we are diligently working to understand and help address the issue of persistent herbicides in compost material.

For example, we have already strengthened the precautionary information on the labels for many of these pesticide products. This new labeling text was developed following incident reports from several years ago. Specifically, for clopyralid, picloram and aminopyralid product labels, we have added stronger advisory language and additional use precautions and restrictions on grazing, haying and using plant residues or manure as compost, mulch or fertilizer. For aminocyclopyrachlor, we suspended use on turf following incident reports of damage to trees from recycled turf clippings. We continue to closely monitor and evaluate all of the information that we receive, including consumer feedback and incident information, to determine if any additional and stronger restrictions or precautionary text should be added to the labels of these pesticides.

In addition to the product label changes, the agency is working with these products' registrants to build and implement a robust stewardship program involving education and training for distributors, sellers, and users of these pesticide products. The program involves educating them on the correct use of the products, tracing the source of contamination and holding parties responsible. More information on this stewardship program and educational outreach efforts can be found at http://www.manurematters.com/na/en/manure_sourcing.htm.

We have also established a workgroup that is evaluating a standardized testing procedure for pesticides that could persist in composted material. Representatives from the U.S. Compost Council, the California Recycling Council, and the State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group participate in this workgroup. SFIREG is a very active and involved network of state regulatory officials working together to "co-regulate" pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act with other states and federal agencies.

The EPA also has a longer-term review effort for the pyridine class of herbicides. As you might know, we are required to periodically review all registered pesticides through the registration review program. This registration review program ensures that all registered pesticides continue to meet the statutory

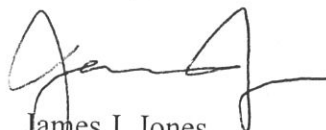
standard for registration; that is, each pesticide can perform its intended function without posing unreasonable risks to human health or the environment. During registration review, the EPA updates the human health and ecological risk assessments for a pesticide as needed based on sound science and the most recent data and information available. Based on these updated assessments, the EPA determines whether products containing the pesticide meet current standards and can be used safely. Registration review includes multiple opportunities for public participation, ensuring that important regulatory decisions are developed in an open, transparent manner. More information on the registration review program can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1/reevaluation/>. Currently, the pesticides in the pyridine class of herbicides are in, or are approaching, the early stages of registration review¹ and we strongly encourage interested members of the public to participate in this process.

During our review of these registrations, we are requiring data from the registrants to help us better understand how persistent these herbicides are in compost and manure. This information may lead to the development of additional mitigation measures, precautionary label text or stewardship measures. All pesticide active ingredients in the pyridine class of chemicals will be screened for potential compost concerns during the registration review process from here on out.

Moving forward, all new registration applications for herbicides in the pyridine class of pesticides will be evaluated for any potential compost issues before their registrations are granted. Depending on our risk analysis, we can and will require additional compost-specific information to minimize any potential risks to compost.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Mr. Sven-Erik Kaiser in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at kaiser.sven-erik@epa.gov or (202) 566-2753.

Sincerely,



James J. Jones
Assistant Administrator

¹ Dockets:

- aminopyralid docket - open for comment until May 27, 2014
<http://www.regulations.gov#!docketDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2013-0749>.
- clopyralid docket - open for comment until May 27, 2014
<http://www.regulations.gov#!docketDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0167>.
- picloram docket
<http://www.regulations.gov#!docketDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2013-0740>.