



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF CHEMICAL SAFETY AND
POLLUTION PREVENTION

August 12, 2024

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Requests to Extend the Public Comment Period for the "Draft Insecticide Strategy to Reduce Exposure of Federally Listed Endangered and Threatened Species and Designated Critical Habitats from the Use of Conventional Agricultural Insecticides."

FROM: Jan Matuszko, Director
Environmental Fate and Effects Division
Office of Pesticide Programs

On July 25, 2024, EPA released the draft Insecticide Strategy for public review and comment. The Agency set a deadline for submitting comments on these documents as 60 days from the date of posting, or September 23, 2024. As part of announcing the draft strategy, EPA had told many stakeholders that it is unable to extend the comment period. To date, however, EPA has received several requests from stakeholders, including national and state crop specific organizations, Crop Life America, and registrants to extend the comment period by 60-120 days primarily citing the complexity and length of strategy and associated documents.

After careful consideration of these requests, EPA regretfully cannot extend the comment period for any length of time in response to these or any future requests. EPA has committed to finalizing this strategy in March 2025 to ensure that future pesticide actions protect listed species before ESA effects determinations and consultations are completed. To consider any changes and finalize the Insecticide Strategy in time, EPA cannot accommodate more than a 60-day comment period, especially given that EPA also needs to work on other ESA initiatives during the same timeframe (e.g., Vulnerable Species Pilot, Rodenticide Strategy). EPA also notes that while the documents are lengthy, the strategy and supporting documents such as the Ecological Mitigation Support Document include consideration of stakeholder feedback and information collected during the development of the Herbicide Strategy. Further, the draft Insecticide Strategy is modeled off the Herbicide Strategy, so many aspects of the former should be familiar to people who have reviewed the latter.

EPA also notes that the draft strategy, once finalized, would not on its own impose any requirements on growers/applicators. It is a framework that EPA intends to incorporate into the existing FIFRA process to register and re-evaluate pesticides. For example, when EPA finalizes the Insecticide Strategy, the Agency would evaluate an insecticide with agricultural uses using the strategy to identify when mitigations are needed as well as the level and geographic extent of those mitigations. As is already the case, EPA would propose those mitigations in a Proposed

Interim Decision or a Proposed Decision, which would provide stakeholders with additional opportunities to comment.

Finally, EPA appreciates the engagement of such a broad range of stakeholders, particularly growers, in these efforts. EPA is willing to meet with stakeholders and organizations to answer questions you may have about the draft Insecticide Strategy to help inform the comments you submit.