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PESTICIDE REGISTRATION IMPROVEMENT EXTENSION ACT (PRIA - 4)

Congress Should Reauthorize PRIA Swiftly

Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), a pesticide cannot be legally used if it has not been registered with EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs. The registration process begins with the submission of an application packet by the registrant. EPA examines the ingredients of the pesticide; the site or crop on which it is to be used; the amount, frequency and timing of its use; and storage and disposal practices. EPA also assesses the hazards to human health and the environment that may be posed by the pesticide, to ensure that it will not have unreasonable adverse effects on humans, the environment and non-target species. Depending on the class of pesticide and the priority assigned to it, prior to the passage of the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act of 2003 (PRIA), the review process could take several years or longer.

In 2003, through the work of a unique coalition consisting of the registrant community (including both agricultural and non-agricultural uses, antimicrobial companies, large and small companies, biotech companies, and biopesticides) and labor and environmental advocates, PRIA was enacted.

PRIA established a new section of FIFRA, which put in place a fee schedule for pesticide registration requests. It lists specific decision time periods for EPA to make a regulatory decision on pesticide registration and tolerance actions submitted to the Agency. The goal of PRIA was to create a more predictable and effective evaluation scheme for affected pesticide decisions and couple the collection of individual fees with specific decision review periods. It also promoted shorter decision review periods for reduced-risk applications. PRIA expires in 2017.

PRIA has been beneficial for stakeholders: it has provided predictable timelines for industry, new products for consumers, funds for completion of various registration activities (tolerance reassessment/re-registration), and funds for pesticide safety education for farmworkers. These have been accomplished by providing stable funding for EPA. It has also seen positive implementation with process improvements and strong stakeholder involvement, and furthered the openness and transparency of good government.

That same coalition has come together again to negotiate a legislative proposal for reauthorization (dubbed PRIA-4). The coalition's PRIA-4 proposal is a consensus document that clarifies the intent of the original bill and continues the fee for service program, with some technical adjustments and increased stable funding.

PRIA-4 builds upon the win-win tradition of the first PRIA. It also increases and clarifies categories covered, uses maintenance fees for registration review, protects funds for grant programs, and increases funding. PRIA-4 will continue the positive progress that the original PRIA brought to the pesticide registration process, and Congress should move quickly to reauthorize the highly successful pesticide registration program and provide certainty for the regulated community.

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