PAN & UFW urge EPA to protect kids from neurotoxic pesticide

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The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is finalizing its review of the health harms of the widely used insecticide chlorpyrifos when it drifts from fields where it is applied. As the public comment period closes today, PAN and the United Farm Workers (UFW) are submitting over 20,000 signatures to EPA from concerned members across the country, urging the agency to more fully consider the current research indicating that children are particularly vulnerable to harm from chlorpyrifos. The petition calls on EPA to create better protections for children, especially from pesticide drift.

Kristin Schafer, PAN's Policy & Communications Director, released the following statement:

> "The science linking this pesticide with children's health harms is very strong — and keeps getting stronger. EPA is reviewing the impact of drift on communities near fields where chlorpyrifos is applied — but the agency hasn't fully considered the harm this chemical can cause to children. The evidence of damage to children's developing brains and nervous systems is especially strong. Even very low levels of exposure in the womb and during the first 7 years of life have been linked to falling IQs and developmental disabilities.
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> Scientists have known for more than a decade that chlorpyrifos is especially harmful to children — this is why EPA pressed for a withdrawal of home use products back in 2002. Today, thousands of our supporters from across the country are urging EPA to make it a priority to protect children who are in harms way from chlorpyrifos drift. It's the agency's job to protect public health — and this is a great opportunity to do it. We want to see them step up."

Erik Nicholson, Vice-President of the United Farm Workers, released the following statement:

> "Farmworker children are very much on the front line of exposure to chlorpyrifos. They're bodies are more vulnerable to the chemical than adults — plenty of studies have shown this. They often face double or triple exposure, as they take in residues of the chemical on their food (as children across the country do), as well as drifting into their homes and schools, and brought home from the fields on their parents' clothes. This is well documented, and EPA needs to do a much better job considering these exposures piled on from every direction.
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> UFW is urging the agency to follow the science, and take action — sooner than later — to protect farmworker children and kids in agricultural communities from this dangerous pesticide."

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