



## State Policy Progress, Momentum & Wins

You've probably heard plenty from PAN about the high profile national work we're involved in — maybe you've asked your Senator to support the Protect America's Children from Toxic Pesticides Act (PACTPA)? Or perhaps you've checked out our priorities for the next Farm Bill? We're calling for federal food and farm policies that work for farmers, workers and communities.

However, unless you live in one of the states in which PAN has an on-the-ground organizing presence, you might not know about the exciting state-level legislative work we've been doing with partners across the country.

### Minnesota: Pollinator wins and restoring local control

Organizing Co-Director Zoe Hollomon was hard at work in Minnesota this session, taking advantage of an exciting new dynamic in the state legislature — almost one third of its members were new. We're excited to report that bills supporting increased assistance for emerging and BIPOC farmers, paid family and medical leave that includes farmworkers, and a ban on corporate mergers that substantially reduce competition found much needed support. Minnesota also passed several pollinator bills that have been years in the making — among them a precedent-setting bill to better regulate the disposal of neonic-treated seeds.

Another groundbreaking win is the passage of a bill that restores some elements of local control over pollinator-lethal pesticides. The bill has its limitations, as it only applies to Minnesota's four largest cities, and is not applicable to pesticide sales. Still, the passage marks an important moment where, for the first time in history, a U.S. state has restored local control over pesticides after being preempted (losing the right to make those decisions at the local level).

### California: Environmental justice and resilient food systems

The 2023 legislative session has been an important moment to build relationships with policymakers and cultivate new champions for health and justice in the state's food and farming systems — a priority for Organizing Co-Director Asha Sharma. One of these champions is Assemblymember Alex Lee, who we've partnered with for AB 652. This bill would establish an Environmental Justice Advisory Committee at the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR).

After decades of trying to work with DPR to promote common sense pesticide regulations, we've witnessed a pro-industry culture

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# Appreciating Pollinator Diversity

by Rob Faux, Communications Manager

When I first entered the world of growing professionally, it was tempting to assume that any new insect was intent on destroying my crops. However, it's important for farmers to learn about invertebrates that actually work with us to successfully steward our land. Many of the crops on our diversified farm rely on pollination services, and I wanted to explore some less well-known invertebrates and their powers of pollination.

## Hoverflies: They're everywhere

Hoverflies can be found on every continent except Antarctica, and there are approximately 6,000 known species. Hoverfly populations are often greater than wild bee species, so even if they are less efficient than bees, they can make up for that with their relative abundance. Some hoverflies even prey on aphids, a pest on our farm.

Hoverflies are generalists, visiting a wide range of plants looking for nectar as a food source. Unlike most bees, they are not restricted to a limited home range and they can carry pollen over longer distances while foraging or during migration.



## Green Bees: Showy and shy

Another insect that has had my attention for a while is the Green Bee or Green Sweat Bee. These insects will visit a wide range of flowers, including goldenrod on our farm. Green Bees are typically ground-nesting, though some will use hollow twigs and logs.

Simply knowing a few facts about Green Bees has encouraged me to continue our farm's program to leave areas of the ground undisturbed, rather than tilling everything. It also solidifies our desire to leave leaf litter and brush piles as natural areas.



## Soldier Beetle: They eat, you harvest

The Soldier Beetle is another frequent visitor to our growing areas at the farm. They are great predators of caterpillars, aphids and other soft-bodied insects that find our vegetable plants attractive. These beetles have one generation of young each year, while some types of aphids can have eight or more generations of young. If you need an example to explain why broad-spectrum insecticides are a bad idea, here it is! The pest can rapidly repopulate while the predator cannot.

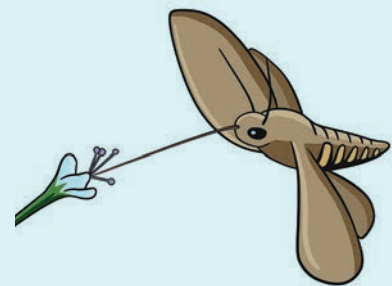
Soldier Beetles particularly like to visit flowers where they can lie in wait for their prey, and they are frequent guests on some of the flowers we intercrop with our melons and squash. As a result, they appear on the vine plants as well.



## Hawkmoth: Long tongue, will pollinate

It's hard not to be fascinated by the Hummingbird Moth or Hawkmoth as it hovers over flowers seeking nectar. Hawkmoths have a long proboscis that enables them to reach into flowers that keep pollen and nectar deep within them. They can carry pollen as far as fifteen to twenty miles from the source, unlike honeybees that typically go no further than three to five miles from their hive.

I wanted to include the Hawkmoth to remind all of us that not all pollinators are dedicated to servicing our food. As a matter of fact, some hawkmoth larva can cause problems for our crops, but we've simply recognized that their population isn't too large and the small amount of damage they might create isn't a problem. As long as our natural system is balanced, they don't qualify as a pest—especially when you consider their value as pollinators.



# The Revolving Door at EPA

It's no secret that the chemical industry holds undue influence over regulatory processes in the U.S., and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is no exception. In reviewing the health and environmental impacts of pesticide products, EPA often relies on industry-funded studies, with corporate science that is rarely available for public review. Further, chemical companies commonly sit on panels and committees that "advise" EPA regulators.

One of the most effective strategies Big Ag uses to sway government agencies may be the "revolving door." Former agrochemical industry executives, lawyers and scientists serve in the government agencies that are charged with overseeing their industries — and vice-versa. Former EPA employees use their intimate knowledge of regulatory processes to help industries navigate them. How deep does this problem go?

## The culture of the agency

You might think a former EPA employee would gravitate towards continued work in conservation, but that's not the norm. Former employees regularly leave public service for lucrative careers in extractive industries, making it practically a tradition at the agency. According to an analysis by The Intercept, since 1974, all seven of the EPA pesticide office's directors who continued to work after leaving the agency went on to make money from the pesticide companies they used to regulate.

These directors have accepted university positions funded by Monsanto, Bayer, and Syngenta. Some of them have worked as attorneys for the industry or served as board members of agrochemical companies. Other EPA officials have left the agency to work directly for the agrochemical industry:

- Stephen Johnson: EPA administrator and assistant administrator for the Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances → Joined the board of Scotts Miracle-Gro, which markets the pesticide glyphosate in the U.S.
- Linda Fisher: Assistant EPA administrator → Moved on to work for Monsanto and DuPont.

- John Todhunter: Assistant EPA administrator in charge of pesticides → Went on to become a pesticide consultant.

This flow of experts from the EPA to pesticide companies doesn't just enable dangerous chemicals to evade regulatory scrutiny — it also shapes the culture within the agency, and explains why regulation problems have persisted through changes in presidential administrations.

## Better protective laws

The enormous influence of chemical corporations has hampered meaningful regulation of pesticides in the U.S., leaving communities exposed to harmful chemicals not tolerated in many other countries. While PAN continues to shine a light on corporate capture of our regulatory agencies, another way to get the protection we need is to update the law that applies to pesticide oversight.

The current law, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) was originally passed in 1947 and contains provisions that prioritize pesticide industry interests. According to the statute, EPA can only refuse to re-register a pesticide if the risks it poses to human health, wildlife, and the environment are greater than the economic benefits it provides.

A proposed replacement, the Protect America's Children from Toxic Pesticides Act (PACTPA) addresses many of FIFRA's shortcomings. The bill provides significant protections for communities that bear the brunt of pesticide exposure, prohibits the use of old stockpiles of banned pesticides, and requires the listing of inert ingredients on all pesticide products, which can be as toxic as the active ingredient and can make up 50% or more of a pesticide formulation. →



## Sustain PAN's Work Give Monthly

When you join PAN as a Sustainer, you become part of a vital group that donates each month to fund grassroots science, collaboration with frontline communities, and policy change. We rely on consistent support from Sustainers to work towards a healthy, fair and resilient system of food and farming.

**Become a Sustainer today by going to [www.panna.org/give-monthly](http://www.panna.org/give-monthly).**



**TAKE ACTION** Urge your Senators to support PACTPA at [www.panna.org/pactpa](http://www.panna.org/pactpa)

**ABOUT PAN** Pesticide Action Network's mission is to end reliance on hazardous pesticides and achieve health, resilience and justice in food and farming. PAN uses grassroots science, strategic communications and coalition organizing to build power with communities across the U.S. and around the world to confront the harms of industrial agriculture and to build solutions. We are one of five regional centers who cooperate to transform systems of food and farming across the globe.

that too frequently ignores community concerns. This is especially true for people, such as farmworkers, who are most impacted by the health effects of pesticide exposure. The Advisory Committee would provide recommendations on how DPR can integrate environmental justice into its decision-making, and DPR would be required to report on how they're implementing the committee's recommendations. We're happy to report that the bill passed through the California State Assembly, and is still working its way through the Senate.

## Hawai'i: Protections from restricted use pesticides

Hawai'i's 2023 legislative session saw PAN and partners focused on several bills related to Restricted Use Pesticides (RUPs). Recent data shows that central O'ahu suffers from the heaviest application rates of these chemicals in all of Hawai'i. Over 215,000 pounds of RUPs were applied in this region during 2019 alone, approximately 60% of RUPs applied in Hawai'i during this time period. The bills we championed aimed to address this issue and protect Hawai'i's keiki (children), communities, and land.

Our work in Hawai'i is rooted in community-building, and collaborating with those most at risk of pesticide exposure by supporting them and amplifying their voices. Organizing Co-Director Lorilani Keohokālole collaborated with partners at the Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) to offer opportunities to take action and share testimony in support of these protections.

We were disappointed that none of these bills were scheduled for a hearing, but our advocacy for clean land, air, water, and healthy communities in Hawai'i continues year-round — and we'll be ready for the next session.

## What's happening in your state?

Regardless of the outcome at the close of state legislative sessions, the organizing and advocacy involved in the entire process is inherently valuable. We're building relationships with policy-makers, forming alliances with partner organizations, and raising awareness on the public stage around the issues we believe are important. Even if you don't live in Minnesota, California, or Hawai'i, perhaps something you read here could inspire action in your own neck of the woods. 🌱

## Meet PAN Board Member Audrey Tran Lam

Audrey Tran Lam has been connected with PAN for many years, and had the chance to meet with staff in person during our 35th anniversary celebration at Grinnell Heritage Farm in Iowa. After that event, Audrey knew she wanted to deepen her relationships with this work and those behind it.

In her role as Environmental Health Program Director at the Center for Energy & Environmental Education, Audrey oversees two statewide public health education initiatives, in

both urban and agricultural settings. "Good Neighbor Iowa and Farming for Public Health both prioritize land-based solutions that embrace biodiversity and eliminate the need for chemical inputs in favor of soil and human health."

Audrey believes that reducing harmful pesticide use is only part of the solution, and she shares an understanding that the bigger picture of environmental, ecological, climate, and human injustices need to be taken into account and addressed as a system. 🌱



**"When I think about the future, I think about one in which human health, biodiversity, and our natural ecosystems are prioritized before profit."**

— Audrey Tran Lam

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