Oppose the Protecting America's Children from Toxic Pesticides Act (PACTPA)
(H.R. 7940 and S. 4406)

Requested Action:

Please oppose PACTPA. The legislation would undermine the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) rigorous scientific evaluation of pesticide products and ban products that are essential to the protection of American's public health, pets, infrastructure, schools, waterways, and green spaces.

Background:

Pesticides are vital to the protection of America's public health, infrastructure, and natural resources. Pesticides:

- Protect crops and livestock from pests and disease;
- Protect buildings and infrastructure from pests such as termites and mold;
- Protect our waterways and natural resources from invasive species such as hydrilla and water hyacinth;
- Protect endangered species and their habit from invasive pests;
- Protect people and pets from disease carrying pests like mosquitoes, ticks, and rodents;
- Maintain safe, beautiful, and functional outdoor spaces such as home lawns, gardens, athletic fields, golf courses, and parks;
- Protect power lines, railroad tracks, highway rights of ways, and other infrastructure from overgrowth and weeds;
- Protect homes and buildings from fire by controlling brush and overgrowth and creating fire breaks; and
- Sanitize facilities such as cafeterias, schools, restaurants, and hospitals and prevent the spread of viruses and germs.

Pesticides are rigorously tested and must be approved by both the EPA and states before they can be sold in the United States.

- Product registration by the EPA can take up to 10 years and involves up to 120 different tests and studies that can take years to complete. The tests generally must be conducted according to EPA prescribed Good Laboratory Practices. All pesticides used to control public health pests require additional efficacy testing.
- The registration process includes risk assessments to ensure that the product protects the environment, endangered species, and human health, including the health of children, the elderly, and immune-compromised individuals.
- EPA must reevaluate all registered pesticides at least every 15 years to determine whether they continue to meet the safety standards and "do not unreasonably adversely affect" human health, the environment, or endangered species. Under the law, EPA must complete registration review by October 1, 2022 for all pesticides registered as of October 1, 2007.
- EPA can at any time initiate a Special Review process if it becomes concerned about the risk posed by a pesticide based on new scientific evidence. This process could result in the cancellation of one or more uses of the product or other product label requirements.
- Pesticide products must also be registered at the state level before they can be sold or used in a state.

Contrary to its title, the bill would harm children by creating more exposure to harmful pests such as mosquitoes, ticks, and rodents. PACTPA would ban numerous EPA-approved pesticide products

including organophosphates; neonicotinoids; and any product banned or otherwise prohibited by the European Union, one or more countries in the European Union, or Canada. It would also allow the public to petition EPA to ban products, circumventing the science-based registration process. The loss of vital pesticide products will harm the public health, our pet's health, and our natural resources.

- Mosquitoes can carry West Nile virus, Zika virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and yellow fever. Ticks can carry Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Organophosphates are used to protect people and pets from mosquitoes, ticks, bed bugs, and other harmful and disease-carrying insects.
- According to the CDC, rodents directly transmit eleven serious diseases (including Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, plague, and tularemia) and indirectly transmit even more. Effective rodent control is essential to protecting the health and well-being of our families and communities.
- Weeds such as poison ivy and ragweed can exacerbate allergies.

This bill would take tools away from those who most need them. Integrated pest management (IPM) is a system of managing pests that involves using the best combination of cultural, biological, and chemical measures for particular circumstances to ensure the most cost effective, environmentally sound, and socially acceptable method of managing diseases, insects, weeds, and other pests.

- Neonicotinoids are essential in protecting trees, green spaces, and agricultural and forest lands from invasive pests such as the recently introduced spotted lanternfly and Asian longhorned tick, as well as more established wood borers such as the emerald ash borer, Asian citrus psyllid, the Hemlock woolly adelgid, the Asian longhorned beetle, and the Japanese beetle, which continue to threaten our natural resources.
- Invasive species are plants, animals, insects, and even fungus or bacteria that are not native to the local ecosystem and can cause harm to that ecosystem. In addition to harming our ecosystem, invasive species can also threaten our economy and public health by damaging roads, highways, and other infrastructure. Pesticides can help control and kill invasive species.
- Invasive aquatic weeds interfere with commercial navigation and recreational activities; destroy fish, amphibian, and wildlife habitat by out-competing native species and depleting water oxygen content; and forming dense areas of plant growth that create safety hazards for people and pets.

PACTPA would allow localities to restrict pesticide products in defiance of state preemption laws, creating a confusing patchwork or pesticide regulation.

- Contradictory and overlapping regulations differing from locality to locality could lead to situations were certain vital tools could be used to protect one community but not the other, jeopardizing public health.
- The lack of uniformity creates confusion for pest control, lawn care, and landscape professionals who often work in more than one locality.
- The EPA and state pesticide registration processes are science-based processes that thoroughly evaluate the risks and benefits of pesticide products. Most local governments do not have the scientific experts or the resources to make informed decisions about the safety of pesticide products.