Message

From: Hamernik, Karen [Hamernik.Karen@epa.gov]
Sent: 1/15/2021 5:49:24 PM
To: Messina, Edward [Messina.Edward@epa.gov]; Goodis, Michael [Goodis.Michael@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: quick question about a recent EPA press release that mentions citizen science and PFAS

Ed, Mike –

I got this note from Jay Benforado. By way of background, he is currently shepherding Citizen Science visioning, guidelines, and ethics/legal concern activities and related draft documents, working with the STPC and AAs.

He would like to learn more about the referenced article (below) which discusses PFAS contamination identified in a pesticide product for mosquito control, via citizen science; I think Ed mentioned this briefly in this week's IO meeting.

Can one of you provide direction for a contact on this or thoughts?

Thanks,
Karen

From: Benforado, Jay <Benforado.Jay@epa.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 10:01 AM
To: Hamernik, Karen <Hamernik.Karen@epa.gov>
Subject: quick question about a recent EPA press release that mentions citizen science and PFAS

Hi Karen – I'd like to learn more about the EPA example of using citizen science in the pesticides program – see the highlighted language below. Do you know who I might contact at EPA (probably the Pesticide program) to learn about the citizen science component? Jay

EPA Takes Action to Investigate PFAS Contamination

WASHINGTON (January 14, 2021) — As part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) extensive efforts to address PFAS, today the agency is making new information available about EPA testing that shows PFAS contamination from fluorinated containers.

Through a coordinated effort with both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and a pesticide manufacturer, the agency has determined that fluorinated high-density polyethylene (HDPE) containers that are used to store and transport a mosquito control pesticide product contain PFAS compounds that are leaching into the pesticide product.

While the agency is early in its investigation and assessment of potential impacts on health or the environment, the affected pesticide manufacturer has voluntarily stopped shipment of any products in fluorinated HDPE containers and is conducting its own testing to confirm EPA results and product stability in un-fluorinated containers. In addition, EPA has issued a request for information under the Toxics Substance Control Act (TSCA) to the company that fluorinates the containers used by certain pesticide manufacturers. The TSCA subpoena requests information about the fluorination process used to treat the containers.

As EPA evaluates this issue, the agency asks that pesticide and other companies using fluorinated containers, and entities that provide container fluorination services, engage in good product stewardship and examine their distribution chains to identify potential sources of contamination. EPA will also continue to work closely with the entities involved and their supply and distribution chains, mosquito control districts, the pesticide and packaging industry, federal partners, states, and tribes that may be affected to provide information and guidance on next steps. EPA understands the need to provide guidance to states, tribes, and other users as they prepare to purchase mosquito control products for 2021 and will provide more information as it continues its investigation.

EPA will update the following webpage with information as it becomes available: https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/pfas-packaging

Background

Since first becoming aware of the PFAS contamination issue in early September 2020 through citizen science testing of a pesticide product for mosquito control, EPA has been working to investigate the source of the contamination. Throughout October and November 2020, EPA has worked diligently in conjunction with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to request samples of the pesticide product and analyze the identified product at different steps of production and manufacturing to determine whether PFAS are present, including issuing an information request to the pesticide registrant on October 5, 2020 seeking information on the affected pesticide's production, sales, and distribution.

In late December 2020, EPA studied the fluorinated HDPE containers used to store and transport the product and determined the containers are a possible source of PFAS contamination. EPA has been in close contact with Massachusetts, the pesticide registrant and the fluorinated HDPE container treatment company to discuss the issue, as well as to obtain the materials needed to test for PFAS in the product and the fluorinated HDPE containers.

Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), EPA is charged with approving active and inert ingredients in the registered pesticide products sold in the United States. EPA has confirmed that PFAS is not a known ingredient or additive in the company's affected product and is collaboratively working with the registrant as EPA laboratories test samples of the product at different steps of production and manufacturing, in addition to the agency's study of the containers themselves.

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