Message

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EPA Takes Action to Protect Public Health by Proposing Cancellation of Pentachlorophenol

03/05/2021

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EPA Takes Action to Protect Public Health by Proposing Cancellation of Pentachlorophenol

In support of the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to making evidence-based decisions to protect human health, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is taking an important step by proposing the cancellation of the registration of pentachlorophenol. Pentachlorophenol is a heavy-duty wood preservative used primarily on utility poles.

After completing a risk assessment, EPA determined that pentachlorophenol poses significant human health risks to workers. To address this issue, EPA is proposing to cancel all uses of pentachlorophenol through the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) registration review process. The agency will accept public comments on this proposed interim decision (PID) for 60 days in docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0653 at regulations.gov.

EPA's proposed action would align the United States with the United Nation's Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which has banned the use of pentachlorophenol. EPA has worked with industry stakeholders to identify a number of viable, safer alternatives such

as copper naphthenate and DCOIT, along with well-established wood preservatives such as chromated arsenicals and creosote.

This proposed interim decision (PID) is the next step in the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) registration review process that EPA conducts at least every 15 years. After considering any comments concerning the PID, EPA will issue an interim decision, which would finalize the cancelation of pentachlorophenol.

Pesticide Program Update: EPA Releases Testing Data Showing PFAS Contamination from Fluorinated Containers

03/05/2021

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EPA Releases Testing Data Showing PFAS Contamination from Fluorinated Containers

As the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) pursues its mission to protect human health and the environment, addressing risks related to PFAS is a priority. To this end, EPA is making available new testing data related to PFAS found in fluorinated containers in which a mosquito control product was packaged and sold. EPA is also announcing its planned next steps to further characterize and address this potential source of contamination.

"Advancing science and taking action to reduce the health risks associated with PFAS go hand-in-hand," **said Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Michal Freedhoff.** "The Biden-Harris Administration's focus on developing and using the best available science will guide our decision-making, strengthen our work with stakeholders,

and lead to pragmatic solutions that advance our efforts to address PFAS contamination and protect human health."

Since first becoming aware of the PFAS contamination issue in September 2020 through citizen science testing of a pesticide product, EPA has been working to investigate the source of the contamination. In December 2020, EPA studied the fluorinated HDPE containers used to store and transport the product and preliminarily determined the fluorination process used may be the source of PFAS contamination.

In January 2021, EPA continued its testing which showed the PFAS were most likely formed from a chemical reaction during the container fluorination process which then leached into the pesticide product. After completing a robust quality assurance and quality control process, EPA can confirm that it has detected eight different PFAS from the fluorinated HDPE containers, with levels ranging from 20-50 parts per billion.

While EPA is early in its investigation, the agency will use all available regulatory and non-regulatory tools to determine the scope of this emerging issue and its potential impact on human health and the environment. It is important to note that although these types of products should not be a source of PFAS, the data indicates that the amount of PFAS that has entered the environment from the contamination in the containers the agency tested is extremely small. The agency is also committed to coordinating with the affected entities involved and their supply and distribution chains, pesticide users, the pesticide and packaging industry, and its federal, state, and tribal partners as it works through this complex health and environmental issue.

Building on the agency's initial actions announced in January 2021, EPA initiated a series of steps to tackle this issue including:

- On Jan. 13, 2021, to minimize risks to human health and the environment, EPA asked states with existing stock of the mosquito product distributed in fluorinated HDPE containers to discontinue use and hold that inventory until its final disposition is determined. The pesticide manufacturer has also notified all its customers regarding management of the product, voluntarily stopped shipments of all products in fluorinated HDPE containers, and is now using non-fluorinated containers.

- On Jan. 14, 2021, EPA issued a TSCA subpoena to the company that fluorinated the containers supplied to the manufacturer of the pesticide in which PFAS was discovered to learn more about the fluorination process used on the HDPE containers.

- EPA is aware that many companies are using fluorinated HDPE containers to store and distribute pesticide and other products. EPA is actively working with the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and industry and trade organizations to raise awareness of this emerging issue and discuss expectations of product stewardship. For example, EPA is coordinating with the Ag Container Recycling Council, the American Chemistry Council, Crop Life America, the Household & Commercial Products Association, and the National Pest Management Association.

- The agency is also testing different brands of fluorinated containers to determine whether they contain and/or leach PFAS, and if so, learn the conditions affecting leaching. EPA will present these findings as expeditiously as possible.

- The agency is encouraging the pesticide industry to explore alternative packaging options, like steel drums or non-fluorinated HDPE.

To view the data and learn more, visit: https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/pfas-packaging

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