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Sent: Friday, October 10, 2003 11:50 AM
Subject: Attorney Generals Petition for IPM Use in Low Income Housing

Courtesy of Audrey Moore, US EPA Region 2 Regional Ag Policy Specialist

Subject: Attorneys General from 11 States petition U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development to initiate use of IPM in low income housing.

Attorneys General Petition To Enforce IPM Mandate in FIFRA,
 Asking HUD To Protect Residents From Pesticides
 (Beyond Pesticides, October 9, 2003)

A petition was filed with the federal government yesterday using a little known provision of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) which requires all federal agencies to "use Integrated Pest Management techniques in carrying out pest management activities and shall promote Integrated Pest Management through procurement and regulatory policies and other activities" (7U.S.C.136r-1).

The attorneys general from 11 states filed a petition with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) insisting that it start complying with the law and stop allowing toxic pesticides to be used as a first response to pest problems in low income housing units. Instead, they argue, **HUD should initiate pest prevention through the use of integrated pest management (IPM) strategies, which include non-chemical and least-toxic approaches to pest control.**

"Millions of people, including children, who live in public housing are exposed to chemical pesticides because a federal agency has chosen not to comply with the law," said New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. "Integrated Pest Management will lead to more effective pest control while decreasing residents' exposure to toxic pesticides. HUD should comply with this common sense policy quickly and effectively."

IPM strategies are common sense approaches to pest management and have been found to be cost effective.

"This filing with HUD by Attorneys General from all regions of our country demonstrates once again the serious attention we all need to pay to pesticide use," said New Mexico Attorney General Patricia Madrid. The petition comes from the attorneys general of New York, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

A coalition of environmental, housing, and public health organizations also filed a petition calling on HUD to immediately begin requiring IPM practices at public housing developments.

"This is about environmental justice," said a Senior Attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council, Adrianna Quintero. "HUD's refusal to comply with the law jeopardizes the health of some of the most vulnerable Americans. People who live in public housing share the same rights as everyone else not to be exposed to toxic chemicals."

Approximately 1.3 million families across the country live in housing developments funded by HUD. Although exposure to pesticides can affect anyone's health, children are particularly vulnerable since they are more likely to come into direct contact with pesticides by crawling on the ground and putting things in their mouth. Other susceptible groups include pregnant women and the elderly. Depending on the pesticide and the

exposure, the acute symptoms may vary from flu-like symptoms and allergies, to vomiting, disorientation or in extreme cases, death. Exposures are known to increase the risks of cancer, neurological disorder, liver/kidney damage, respiratory illness, and birth defects, among other things. Once exposed people often become chemically sensitive, a potentially debilitating condition called Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). Although not fully recognized by the medical and policy community, HUD is one of the government agencies that does recognize MCS as a condition covered under the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The petition comes one year after New York Attorney General Spitzer released a report documenting similar charges against HUD within his state (see Daily News story). Since that time, housing authorities in New York have agreed to develop and implement IPM programs. There are currently more than 3000 housing authorities across the country.

Source: Bureau Chief Peter Lehner, New York State Attorney General's Office at State Capitol, Albany, New York

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