

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 29, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you because your company is one of the leading [food service providers/ national restaurant chains / grocery stores] in the United States serving fresh fruits and vegetables. As you know, the majority of consumers are concerned about food safety and healthy diets. Many consumers worry about pesticide residues on their food and potential impacts to their children. Parents, in particular, want to know that they are doing the right thing by choosing the healthy options for their children.

There is growing scientific concern over the impacts of a widely used pesticide called chlorpyrifos (chlor-pyr-i-fos) and other pesticides in the same family, known as organophosphates. Chlorpyrifos and other organophosphates have been linked to a variety of neuro-developmental disorders in children. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a leading organization of 66,000 pediatricians, chlorpyrifos poses specific risks to children. AAP has recognized a wealth of science demonstrating detrimental effects of chlorpyrifos exposure to developing fetuses, infants, children, and pregnant women. A number of studies of American children have found associations between pesticide exposure and neurobehavioral and cognitive defects like lower IQs, autism, and attention deficit disorders. Because of harm to children, chlorpyrifos was phased out of household insecticides in 2000, along with certain uses on tomatoes and grapes.

This is extremely concerning given that residues of these pesticides are regularly found on fruits and vegetables and food is a significant continued source of exposure for consumers. These residues can still be found on washed and peeled fruits and vegetables, limiting the ability of consumers to protect themselves and their families. In addition, farmworkers and families that live in neighborhoods surrounding the fields where these pesticides are applied are at increased risk from pesticide drift.

Today I seek your assistance in clarifying the extent to which your company sources its fruits and vegetables from suppliers that use chlorpyrifos and other organophosphate pesticides that have been linked to human health concerns. I would also appreciate your review of some of the attached scientific studies by the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Marine Fisheries Service (see links below).

In November 2016, EPA released a revised human health risk assessment for chlorpyrifos that confirmed that there are no safe uses for the pesticide and children are regularly exposed to chlorpyrifos in food up to 140x the level that was set to prevent learning disabilities. The National Marine Fisheries Service recently released a biological opinion demonstrating that these impacts are not restricted to humans. They concluded that EPA's proposed registration of chlorpyrifos is affecting 38 species of endangered fish, such as salmon, and it is having negative effects on 37 areas that have been designated as "critical habitat" for endangered species.

As a legislator, I am hopeful that our political appointees at the Environmental Protection Agency are reviewing these items with seriousness, but recent actions and failures there have left many people feeling unprotected. One year ago, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt reversed the recommendations of his own agency's scientists and denied a petition to ban chlorpyrifos. In the year that has followed, Administrator Pruitt has failed to take any safety measures on this dangerous pesticide.

As a result, I feel it is important to understand what large food buyers in the private sector are doing to promote healthier farming and a safe food supply, and how you might be leveraging your purchasing power to influence on-farm policies and practices within your fruit and vegetable supply chains. This is especially important since low-cost alternatives to chlorpyrifos already exist. With this in mind, I would appreciate your voluntary participation in providing the following information by May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 so that I can share this information with my constituents and those who have an interest in the matter.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



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Tom Udall  
U.S. Senator

**Survey:**

1. Do you have a policy in place governing pesticide use by your fruit and vegetable suppliers? If so, please describe.
2. Does your policy specifically prohibit the use of chlorpyrifos, organophosphates, or any other pesticides?
3. Are you familiar with the growing body of scientific evidence surrounding the human health and environmental risks of exposure to chlorpyrifos and other organophosphate pesticides, in particular for children?
4. Do you have supplier surveys in place to determine whether your fruit and vegetable growers are using chlorpyrifos or other organophosphate pesticides?
5. Do you have any programs in place to ensure fruits and vegetables included in your kids meal menus are not grown using chlorpyrifos and other organophosphate pesticides?
6. Do you have a policy in place governing the protection of agricultural workers from pesticide exposure by your fruit, vegetable suppliers? If so, please describe.

**Responding:**

Please send a copy of your response to:  
Senator Tom Udall  
531 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Please send an electronic copy of your response to [Jonathan\\_Black@tomudall.senate.gov](mailto:Jonathan_Black@tomudall.senate.gov)

**Additional Information:**

**The EPA's 2016 Risk Assessment can be found here:**

- <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0653-0454>

**The National Marine Fisheries Service's Biological Opinion can be found here:**

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/biological-opinion-pesticides-chlorpyrifos-diazinon-and-malathion>