

April 10, 2025

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

I am writing to request your support for critical funding for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) in the FY 2026 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Funding Request Details:

- **Agency:** Environmental Protection Agency
- **Account:** Environmental Programs and Management (EP&M)
- **Program:** Pesticide Licensing
- **Funding Requested:** \$147.1 million for EP&M account

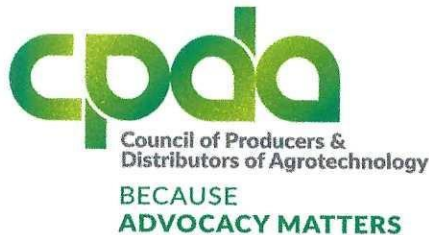
This funding level, combined with FY 2024 funding levels in the State and Tribal Assistance (STAG) and Science and Technology (S&T) accounts, would result in total funding of \$166 million for the Office of Pesticide Programs, meeting the minimum "trigger" amount required under the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA 5).

Background:

Since 2004, PRIA has established a successful model for pesticide registration, similar to user fee programs for prescription drugs and medical devices. The law has been reauthorized four times and establishes a schedule of fees for pesticide registration actions under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), along with timelines for those actions. PRIA supports the registration of various pesticide products, including crop protection products, biopesticides, disinfectants, and other products that protect human health, communities, and the environment.

Justification:

When PRIA 5 was enacted on December 29, 2022, it increased industry fees for registration services by 30% from 2012 levels and included funding for worker protection education programs, pesticide risk reduction programs, and partnership grants. However, funding for the Office of Pesticide Programs has declined significantly from \$144 million in FY 2004, with staffing falling by more than 30%. While the agency reports completing more actions annually, they are often significantly delayed, contradicting PRIA's fundamental purpose.



Requested Report Language:

In addition to the programmatic funding request, we respectfully request the following report language:

"The Committee is concerned by the timeliness and pace of operations at the Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) and notes the statutory requirements in the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act of 2022, in particular on the independent third-party assessment (FIFRA Section 33(c)(3)(C)) and extension of decision review time periods (FIFRA Section 33(f)(5)(A)), are not being met. Such delays and uncertainty deter potential applicants and fundamentally undercut the program's impact; therefore, the Committee directs EPA to report back to the Committee within [60] days of enactment of this act outlining an implementation plan to immediately address these delinquencies, including how the agency will ensure there are adequate personnel levels to meet statutory obligations and identifying areas where staffing is necessary to reduce backlog. The Committee expects OPP to prioritize resources to meet statutory deadlines in a transparent manner that also maintains the current high standards of scientific review and the Office may use a wide range of currently available tools, such as automation and artificial intelligence, self-certification, and the use of registrant-developed data, to implement process efficiencies for all pesticide registration actions. Additionally, the Committee expects EPA to provide quarterly briefings to the Committee regarding compliance with this direction."

Despite accountability provisions in PRIA 5, significant delays in agency actions persist, hampering innovation investment and delaying availability of needed pathogen, pest, and weed management tools. The requested funding level would ensure EPA has adequate resources to meet statutory decision deadlines, enabling new products to reach the market and allowing research and development investments to proceed with confidence in market access.

Illinois farmers depend on prompt access to crop protection tools, but the regulatory backlog at the EPA significantly impedes their ability to combat pests and diseases effectively. This issue directly impacts several CPDA member companies headquartered in Illinois, including Brandt Consolidated, Growmark, Rizobacter, Solvay USA, and Stepan Company. These businesses suffer negative economic consequences due to these persistent regulatory delays, affecting both their operations and the agricultural communities they serve.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. I am available to discuss this further or provide additional information as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Terry Kippley', is written over a horizontal line.

Terry Kippley
President & CEO