



TRIBAL PESTICIDE PROGRAM COUNCIL

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May 12, 2017

Mr. Scott Pruitt, Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W.
Mail Code: 1101A
Washington, DC 20460
pruitt.scott@epa.gov

RE: Tribal Pesticide Program Council

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

We are writing to introduce you to the Tribal Pesticide Program Council (TPPC) and request your support for Tribal pesticide programs. The TPPC is an EPA Tribal partnership group that serves as a Tribal technical resource and program and policy development dialogue group, focused on pesticides issues and concerns. The TPPC assists Tribes in building tribal pesticide programs, providing pesticide education and training, and researching, developing and presenting a broad range of Tribal pesticide-related issues and concerns.

Tribal agricultural programs are major economic engines for many Tribes and provide a source of food, revenue, and jobs for Tribal communities. Tribal agricultural programs are also inherently reliant upon pesticide regulatory programs to provide regulatory certainty to producers, and to ensure that the food supply that is produced meets consumer and distributor food safety and security expectations.

At the current time only about 90 of the 566 federally-recognized Tribes are covered by pesticide cooperative agreements. Although not every Tribe requires a pesticide regulatory program, there is still a very large gap in coverage in Indian Country. For those Tribes that are not covered by a pesticide cooperative agreement, EPA has direct implementation authority, however EPA does not currently have the capacity to manage and monitor pesticide activities on Tribal reservations that in many cases are located hundreds of miles from EPA's regional offices. Most Tribes therefore support the concept of cooperative federalism whereby EPA provides resources directly to Tribes and states to develop and implement locally administered pesticide regulatory programs.

Despite the importance of Tribal pesticide programs for Tribal economies, the development and implementation of new Tribal programs has stagnated. Over the last several years the Office of Pesticide Programs and the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance has been very supportive of expanding Tribal pesticide program capacity, but their respective office budgets have not allowed this to happen. Therefore we are seeking to leverage EPA's strategic planning effort for the Agency, with the

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goal of the strategic plan including strategic objectives for a modest increase in the number of Tribal pesticide programs. We are requesting your support in this endeavor since Tribal pesticides programs are critical for Tribes, and these programs are strongly embedded in EPA's regulatory authority.

Along with our interest in your support for strategic objectives for building Tribal pesticide program capacity, we are also appealing to you to protect State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) funds for Tribes and states because this funding is critical for implementation of existing regulatory programs. Although Tribal programs have many similarities to state programs, Tribes do not currently have their own pesticide registration programs and therefore do not collect pesticide registration fees. In addition, most Tribes do not tax their members and thus do not have an independent revenue stream to fund pesticide regulatory activities. These funding limitations therefore place an increased importance on the STAG funds that EPA uses to assist Tribes with implementing pesticide regulatory programs.

In the interest of leveraging resources and opportunities for increasing Tribal pesticide program capacity the Tribes have been working to strengthen collaborative relationships with our state regulatory partners. This has involved sharing of training resources, sharing of enforcement information, and in some cases, joint enforcement actions. For their part, states have recognized the importance of strong and competent Tribal regulatory programs for protecting Tribal lands within their states and the boundaries of their state lands, and have embraced strengthening cooperative relationships with Tribes. Based on positive Tribal\state\EPA feedback regarding the strengthening of Tribal and state relationships, we would also like your support in advocating for these efforts to continue.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to EPA for the successes that our Tribal pesticide programs have achieved over the years. As an interesting point of reference, the very first Tribal-EPA cooperative agreement was a pesticide cooperative agreement back in the 1970's. Since that time Tribal pesticide programs have been very successful in protecting human health and the food supply of our nation, and we are seeking your assistance to ensure our continued success.

If you have any questions for the TPPC, please feel free to contact the TPPC via e-mail at fc Corey@micmac-nsn.gov. We look forward to your response to our request.

Respectfully,



Fred Corey
TPPC Chair

cc: Wendy Cleland-Hamnett, Acting Assistant Administrator, OSCPP
Lawrence Starfield, Acting Assistant Administrator, OECA
Rick Kegwin, Acting Office Director, OPP
David Hindin, Office Director, OC