

STRENGTHENING TRIBAL PESTICIDE PROGRAMS: THE NEED FOR DEDICATED, INCREASED, AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING UNDER FIFRA

POSITION STATEMENT

The 21 Member Tribes of the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona (ITAA) rely on federally supported pesticide programs to protect human health, natural resources, and cultural practices. Chronic underfunding and inequitable resource distribution threaten the continuity and effectiveness of these programs. Without sustained and increased appropriations, Tribes face significant barriers to implementing federally mandated pesticide enforcement, certification, and education activities.

KEY POINTS

- ☼ **Direct increased appropriations are needed** for Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Cooperative Agreements. Funding should support inspections, trainings, compliance monitoring, and enforcement actions.
- ☼ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Pesticide Programs and the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance have **limited pesticide field program and pesticide enforcement grant funds**.
- ☼ **Many tribal programs are not adequately funded** to support a full time pesticide inspector to ensure proper pesticide use and certification.



BACKGROUND

Section 23(a) of FIFRA authorizes EPA to enter into cooperative agreements to assist in ensuring compliance with FIFRA, conduct inspections, and recommend enforcement actions under the Tribal Enforcement Matrix. Only seven Tribes in Arizona and one intertribal consortia, the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc., have direct cooperative agreements with EPA Region 9. Tribal Pesticide Programs are essential to protecting public health, preserving environmental resources, and upholding Tribal sovereignty. However, without adequate and equitable funding, these programs cannot meet federal requirements or community needs.

There is no adequate oversight or enforcement of pesticide use on Tribal lands due to lack of funding to implement pesticide enforcement programs. Additional State and Tribal Assistant Grants and other federal funding, specifically and competitively, need to be made available to Tribes to address pesticide-related issues on Tribal lands.

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Position Statement

The 21 Member Tribes of the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona (ITAA) urge Congress to support funding for pesticide programs to protect human health, natural resources, and cultural practices. These programs are essential for regulating pesticide use, ensuring compliance, and reducing exposure risks—particularly for vulnerable populations. However, chronic underfunding and lack of parity with resource distribution threaten the continuity and effectiveness of these programs. Without sustained and increased appropriations, Tribes face significant barriers to implementing federally mandated pesticide enforcement, certification, and education activities.

Key Points

- Direct increased appropriations for FIFRA Cooperative Agreements. Funding to support inspections, trainings, compliance monitoring, and enforcement actions. Supplemental funding mechanisms must be expanded to address gaps in implementation capacity.
- EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) and the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) have limited pesticide field program and pesticide enforcement grant funds. Available funding is limited and inconsistent, forcing Tribes to rely and leverage funds on other federal grants to sustain core program activities.
- Currently, pesticide product registration and licensing fees collected from companies and State agencies are not equitably shared with Tribes. Federal mechanisms should be established to allocate a position of these fees to Tribal governments.
- The Certification and Training Plan in Indian Country requires Tribes to ensure pesticide applicators are properly trained and certified and many tribal programs are not adequately funded to support a full time pesticide inspector to ensure proper pesticide use and certification.
- The use of pesticides in structures such as homes, day cares, schools, and senior centers can significantly increase exposure to children and vulnerable at-risk populations. Children are more susceptible to pesticide exposure due to their developing stages and having fewer natural defenses.
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) infrastructure is a critical strategy for reducing reliance on chemical pesticides and promoting sustainable practices on tribal lands to protect populations from pesticide or toxic exposures.
- There is an overall lack of pesticide education and training courses available to Tribes in regards to pesticide applicator training, certification, soil and water sampling, inspection training, agricultural and structural basic incident response training for dealing with accidental pesticide exposures to humans and the environment. There is a significant gap in inequity for providing pesticide safety and education to tribal farm workers and handlers which leaves incidents unreported.

Background

Section 23(a) of FIFRA authorizes EPA to enter into cooperative agreements to assist in ensuring compliance with FIFRA, conduct inspections, and recommend enforcement actions under the Tribal Enforcement Matrix. Only seven Tribes in Arizona and one intertribal consortia, ITCA, have direct cooperative agreements with EPA Region 9. In addition, there is no adequate oversight or enforcement of pesticide use on Tribal lands due to lack of funding to implement pesticide enforcement programs. State and Tribal Assistant Grants (STAG) and other federal funding need to be made available to Tribes to address pesticide-related issues on Tribal lands. Tribal Pesticide Programs are essential to protecting public health, preserving environmental resources, and upholding Tribal sovereignty.