

Trump EPA's Review Fails to Acknowledge Paraquat Weed Killer's Links to Parkinson's Disease

Agency Considers Reapproving Lethal Pesticide Banned in Much of World

By [Center For Biological Diversity](#)

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The Environmental Protection Agency today [released](#) two scientific analyses of paraquat that detail the weed killer's lethal risks to humans and wildlife but discount its strong links to Parkinson's disease.

The agency opened a 60-day comment period on the assessments, which are part of a reapproval review for the pesticide. Paraquat is banned across much of the world but used widely and in growing amounts in the United States. By law all pesticides must be reapproved by the EPA every 15 years.

"A pesticide this toxic has no place near our food or the people who help to grow and harvest it," said Nathan Donley, a senior scientist at the Center for Biological Diversity. "The EPA should follow the lead of nearly every other major agricultural country in the world and ban this dangerous stuff for good."

The EPA's analysis discounted considerable evidence that paraquat has been [shown](#) to more than double the risk of developing Parkinson's disease in farmworkers and others suffering occupational exposure.

A separate environmental analysis estimated that approved uses of the pesticide could expose small mammals like chipmunks and bats to more than 600 times the levels known to cause reproductive harm. The analysis found that small songbirds are potentially being exposed to more than 50 times the concentration known to cause death.

Paraquat is one of only two pesticides still used in the United States that is either [banned or being phased out](#) in the European Union, China and Brazil. From [1990 to 2014](#) there have been 27 deaths and more than 200 incidents of harmful exposure involving paraquat in the United States. There has also been [at least one death](#) from paraquat ingestion in the United States each year since 2012.

Despite this paraquat use in the United States is [higher](#) than it's been in the past 25 years, with use rising nearly 200 percent since 2009. The increase has been triggered by its use on superweeds that have developed resistance to glyphosate, commonly sold as Bayer's Roundup.

U.S. farmers currently [use](#) more than 8 million pounds of paraquat each year, including on

peanuts, citrus, wheat, soy, corn, almonds, artichokes, garlic, pears, strawberries, grapes and sweet potatoes.

“It only takes a teaspoon of paraquat to kill a person, so it’s clear 8 million pounds of this stuff is doing extreme harm to our health and the environment,” said Donley.

In July U.S. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-N.Y.) introduced [legislation](#) to ban paraquat.

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