

• Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before November 12, 1998.

#### Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, you may want to become an official party to the proceeding known as an "intervenor". Intervenor play a more formal role in the process. Among other things, intervenors have the right to receive copies of case-related Commission documents and filings by other intervenors. Likewise, each intervenor must provide 14 copies of its filings to the Secretary of the Commission and must send a copy of its filings to all other parties on the Commission's service list for this proceeding. If you want to become an intervenor you must file a motion to intervene according to Rule 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.214) (see appendix 2). Only intervenors have the right to seek rehearing of the Commission's decision.

The date for filing timely motions to intervene in this proceeding is on or before October 15, 1998. Parties seeking to file late interventions must show good cause, as required by section 385.214(b)(3), why this time limitation should be waived. Environmental issues have been viewed as good cause for late intervention.

You do not need intervenor status to have your environmental comments considered. Additional information about the proposed project is available from M. Paul McKee of the Commission's Office of External Affairs at (202) 208-1088.

**Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,**

*Acting Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 98-27608 Filed 10-14-98; 8:45 am]

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#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[OPP-00556; FRL-6039-9]

#### State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG) Water Quality and Pesticide Disposal Working Committee; Open Meeting

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG) Water Quality and Pesticide Disposal Working Committee will hold a 2-day meeting, October 26 and 27, 1998. This notice announces the

location and times for the meeting and sets forth the tentative agenda topics. The meetings are open to the public.

**DATES:** The SFIREG Working Committee on Water Quality and Pesticide Disposal will meet on Monday, October 26, 1998, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Tuesday, October 27, 1998, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at: The Ronald Reagan National Airport Doubletree Hotel, 300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington-Crystal City, VA.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** By mail: Elaine Y. Lyon, Field and External Affairs Division, Office of Pesticide Programs (7506C), Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW., Washington, DC 20460. Office location and telephone number: 1921 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington-Crystal City, VA 22202, Crystal Mall 2 (CM #2), (703) 305-5306, (fax) (703) 308-1850; e-mail: lyon.elaine@epa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The tentative agenda of the SFIREG Working Committee on Water Quality and Pesticide Disposal includes the following:

1. Update on the Pesticide Management Plan.
2. Surface water issues.
3. Aquatic herbicide issues.
4. Aquatic herbicides labeling workgroup.
5. Drinking water levels of concern.
6. Tolerance assessment impacts from water residues under FQPA implementation.
7. Office of Pesticide Programs and Office of Water coordination on water assessments and issues: Goals and an action plan.
8. Use of immunoassay methods in monitoring.
9. Update on pesticide disposal.
10. National Environmental Performance Partnership System.
11. Status of Groundwater Restricted Rule.
12. Reports from committee members.
13. Update from the Office of Pesticide Programs.
14. Update from the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.
15. Other topics as appropriate.

#### List of Subjects

Environmental protection.

Dated: October 8, 1998.

**Bruce A. Sidwell,**

*Acting Director, Field and External Affairs Division, Office of Pesticide Programs.*

[FR Doc. 98-27673 Filed 10-14-98; 8:45 am]

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#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[OPP-00549; FRL-6025-7]

#### Pesticides; Notice to Solicit Public Comment on EPA's Proposal to Publish the Registration Division's Fiscal Year 1999 Workplan

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** EPA is soliciting comments on its proposal to publish the fiscal year 1999 (FY99) workplan for the Registration Division (RD) in keeping with efforts to improve the transparency and flexibility in the pesticide registration process. The Agency is inviting views on the possible benefits and disadvantages of making RD's FY99 workplan publicly available.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before November 16, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** By mail, submit written comments to: Public Information and Records Integrity Branch, Information Resources and Services Division (7502C), Office of Pesticide Programs, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW., Washington, DC 20460. In person, deliver comments to: Rm. 119, CM #2, 1921 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA.

Comments and data may also be submitted electronically to: opp-docket@epamail.epa.gov. Follow the instructions under Unit III. of this document. No Confidential Business Information (CBI) should be submitted through e-mail.

Information submitted as a comment concerning this document may be claimed confidential by marking any part or all of that information as CBI. Information so marked will not be disclosed except in accordance with procedures set forth in 40 CFR part 2. A copy of the comment that does not contain CBI must be submitted for inclusion in the public record. Information not marked confidential will be included in the public docket by EPA without prior notice. The public docket is available for public inspection in Rm. 119 at the Virginia address given above, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** By mail: Rick Keigwin, Registration Division (7505C), Office of Pesticide Programs, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW., Washington, DC 20460. Office location and telephone number: Rm. 713, Crystal Mall #2, 1921

Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA, (703) 305-7618, fax: 703-305-6920, e-mail: keigwin.richard@epamail.epa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This **Federal Register** notice announces the Agency's proposal to make RD's FY99 workplan publicly available in a PR Notice to be published in October 1998, and solicit comments on this proposed action. If, after reviewing any comments, EPA determines that changes to the PR Notice are warranted, the Agency would revise the draft PR Notice before issuing it in final form.

The Agency proposes to increase the transparency of the registration process by publishing the RD's proposed FY99 workplan, and is inviting public input on the advantages as well as the disadvantages of making this information available.

### I. Background

The registration of pesticides (excluding antimicrobials and biopesticides) is performed by the Registration Division of the Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP). Historically, the Agency has reviewed new registration applications and tolerance petitions based upon a system of "first received, first reviewed." In 1993, the Agency switched its process for setting the review queue to a points based system. Under this points based system, RD assigned priority points of differing values depending on the type of action (e.g. Section 18s = 75 points, Experimental Use Permits = 15 points, New Active Ingredients = 10 points). Priority points were also accrued for "aging," i.e., the longer a submission remained in the Agency before being completed, the more priority points it accrued. Actions with the highest number of priority points were generally the first to be completed by each of the science review divisions. Some drawbacks to the priority point system include: difficulty in planning and predicting priorities; some registrant priorities have not been completed in order; little perceived incentive for the registrants to submit comprehensive submissions; and poor reflection of Agency resources allocated toward registration progress.

Despite an increase in registration productivity, backlogs for some critical registration actions remained. To address this concern and to create a more efficient, predictable, and equitable review queue, in June of 1995, the Agency launched a pilot priority system limiting the registrants to five priorities of their choice. Using this method, RD received approximately 170 priorities (designated numbers 1-5) which were blended with Agency

identified priorities (mainly IR-4 and repeat Section 18s) and placed into review. It was generally understood that priority number 1 would be reviewed before priority number 2, and priority number 2 before number 3, etc. PR Notice 95-6 (October 1995) officially announced the new priority policy and procedures, and requested that registrants submit their second round of five priorities (designated numbers 6-10). This round of priorities included new active ingredients, new uses, and experimental use permits. The second round yielded 332 registrant priorities which were blended with EPA priorities.

In April 1997, EPA issued PR Notice 97-2 requesting a third round of five priorities (designated numbers 11-15). The action eligibility for this round was expanded to include inerts and non-fast track amendments, including additional incentives to encourage more products for minor uses, methyl bromide substitutes, and alternatives to certain organophosphates. Changes required in the registration process by the Food Quality Protection Act have caused delays in completing the reviews for priorities 1-10; and delays in the scheduling of priorities 11-15. Registrants identified approximately 600 actions for prioritization in response to PR Notice 97-2.

Review of the registration process reveals a diversity of priority needs: there are statutory priorities such as minor use, me-too, and reduced risk actions; registrants frequently submit their top business priorities; the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) submits priorities on the basis of crop/pest combinations; priorities for grower groups are channeled directly to EPA or revealed by trends in section 18 requests; and priorities for public interest groups are frequently related to contemporary issues, such as identifying methyl bromide replacement chemicals and alternatives to certain organophosphate pesticides.

By publishing its proposed FY99 registration workplan, the Agency expects to extend the transparency and predictability of the registration process. Based upon resource allocations for FY99, RD expects to make decisions on approximately 15 new active ingredients and 75 (non-section 18) tolerance decisions. The Agency will have set its workplan for FY99 by September 30, 1998, and proposes to publish the list of new chemical and new use candidates in October 1998. When making the workplan public the Agency would exclude all confidential business information.

### II. Issues for Comment

The Agency would like to extend the transparency of the registration process. Moreover, EPA believes that there are several benefits from publishing its annual pesticide registration workplan and inviting public comment. A transparent registration workplan would allow opportunities for harmonization of registration work with other pesticide regulatory agencies (e.g., California and Canada), to share similar work and objectives, thereby saving precious resources. EPA also believes that extending the transparency of its process would provide important information to growers, crop consultants, researchers, states, the general public, and other users. The Agency would like to know of any other benefits of publishing its workplan and whether there are any disadvantages to this approach.

### III. Public Record and Electronic Submissions

The official record for this action, as well as the public version, has been established for this action under docket control number "OPP-00549" (including comments and data submitted electronically as described below). A public version of this record, including printed, paper versions of electronic comments, which does not include any information claimed as CBI, is available for inspection from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The official record is located at the Virginia address in "ADDRESSES" at the beginning of this document.

Electronic comments can be sent directly to EPA at:  
opp-docket@epamail.epa.gov

Electronic comments must be submitted as an ASCII file avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Comment and data will also be accepted on disks in Wordperfect 5.1/6.1 or ASCII file format. All comments and data in electronic form must be identified by the docket control number "OPP-00549." Electronic comments on this action may be filed online at many Federal Depository Libraries.

### List of Subjects

Environmental protection, Pesticides.

Dated: October 2, 1998.

**James Jones,**

*Director, Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs*

[FR Doc. 98-27706 Filed 10-14-98; 8:45 am]

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