

MCGA Against Proposed Legislation to Ban Atrazine

Farm Progress/The Farmer

A proposed total ban on atrazine in the U.S., introduced by Minnesota Congressman Keith Ellison (D-5th) ignores overwhelming scientific evidence, according to the Minnesota Corn Growers Association.

In a recent statement, Rep. Ellison cited a study by the Natural Resources Defense Council which claims widespread health effects from atrazine detections in drinking water. MCGA has disputed the science found in the NRDC study, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency has also largely dismissed the NRDC findings.

EPA concluded a twelve-year study of atrazine culminating in the re-registration of the herbicide in 2006. The compound is not required to go through another review until 2021.

"Atrazine is one of the most widely studied crop protection products on the market today," said DeVonna Zeug, a farmer from Wabasso and MCGA president. "When EPA most recently studied atrazine, they reviewed more than 200 studies and 80,000 public comments before recommending that it be re-registered for use by American farmers. Because it controls weeds, atrazine makes more conservation tillage possible, which in turn protects water quality by preventing soil erosion."

Meanwhile, 33 members of the House Agriculture Committee sent a letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson objecting to the Agency's latest re-evaluation of the product. The House Agriculture Committee has jurisdiction over all pesticide registration matters. The members of Congress stated, "We are concerned that the scope of the EPA's current inquiry exceeds its authority and is contrary to the re-registration process put in place by Congress through the Federal Insecticide Fungicide & Rodenticide Act." Nineteen Republicans and fourteen Democrats signed the letter, which was spearheaded by Congressman Leonard Boswell (D-Iowa) and Jerry Moran (R-Kan).