

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 30, 2016

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

I write to you today regarding the ecological draft risk assessment for atrazine that was recently released by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

As you know, atrazine is one of the most widely used herbicides in the United States and is a critical tool for the agriculture industry in Missouri and across the country. Atrazine was first approved for use as an herbicide in 1958 and has been a key tool for our nation's farmers ever since. It has been the subject of numerous scientific studies and is periodically reexamined as required by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). These reexaminations under FIFRA safeguard our environment and human health by confirming that the pesticides we are using meet our strict standards. We rely on the EPA to conduct robust reexaminations using the best available science and to consider all potential benefits and costs in its evaluations.

I understand that the current draft risk assessment is only one step in EPA's overall evaluation of atrazine and that public comments will play an important role as the agency works to finalize its assessment. Comments from impacted stakeholders, including our farmers, should be given full consideration. Additionally, I would urge you to give particular attention to the three process issues I have outlined below:

1. The EPA should work collaboratively with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) throughout development of a final assessment. The USDA conducts extensive monitoring of pesticides and as the federal agency that oversees our nation's agricultural policies, they must have a seat at the table when something as vital to farmers as atrazine is being discussed. Additionally, USDA is the agency that will have the most relevant information about how atrazine is used in real world applications.
2. As you evaluate any potential risks of atrazine, I ask that you, as required under FIFRA, simultaneously give appropriate weight to the benefits of using atrazine, and to any increased risks that could come from the absence of atrazine either from having to shift to other pesticides or less environmentally-beneficial farming techniques. Such a holistic

review is necessary in order to ensure that all of the net environmental impacts are fully understood and appreciated.

3. At the appropriate point in the process, emphasize the importance of appointing a qualified and impartial Science Advisory Panel (SAP) to provide the peer review of atrazine's risk assessment. A transparent and impartial SAP process is critical to ensuring that all affected stakeholders can have faith in any final assessment.

We must maintain an appropriate balance between allowing our farmers to access crop protection tools needed to grow our food, while not unduly impacting human health or the environment. I appreciate EPA's diligence on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Claire McCaskill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Claire" being more prominent and the last name "McCaskill" following in a similar style.

Claire McCaskill
United States Senator