

An Open Letter to Legislative Leaders

Senator Skelos
Legislative Office Building, Room 909
Albany, NY 12247

Senator Klein
Legislative Office Building, Room 913
Albany, NY 12247

Speaker Silver
Legislative Office Building, Room 932 Albany, NY 12248

February 10, 2014

Dear Leader Skelos, Leader Klein and Speaker Silver:

We write to express our strong opposition to language contained within the Executive Budget proposal (S.6357-B/A.8557-B, Part H) which dramatically restructures the state's Pesticide Sales and Use Reporting Law (Chapter 279 of 1996). Among several changes, Part H eliminates requirements for reporting information on where pesticides are used, eviscerating the effectiveness of the law and impeding the public's right-to-know about toxic chemicals being used where they live, work, and play.

The science linking pesticide exposure to adverse health effects is well established. Acute exposure to pesticides can trigger asthma attacks, coughing, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, eye irritation, and headaches. Low dose pesticide exposure in children and in pregnant women has been linked to cancer, birth defects, and child developmental delays. As you may recall, the impetus for this important reporting law came from the breast cancer organizations whose primary concern was gaining greater knowledge of correlating exposure and incidence of disease. This concern has not diminished over the years, but rather has increased.

Data about pesticide use in New York has been used by scientists, public health officials, and advocates to identify areas of excessive pesticide use and to promote sound public policies to protect children's health and the environment at the local, state, and national level.

It is imperative that the Legislature reject the proposed changes and affirm its commitment to assuring that New Yorkers have access to data about the pesticides used in their communities. In the age of open access to information, eliminating pesticide use reporting and substituting it for sales data on a county-by-county basis is grossly inadequate and represents a significant step back in the right-to-know principle that people expect.

We strongly urge the Legislature to reject this proposal. Should you have any questions about our request, please do not hesitate to contact Saima Anjam at Environmental Advocates (518) 462-5526 sanjam@eany.org, Laura Haight at the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) (518)

436-0876 lhaight@nypirg.org, or Adrienne Esposito at Citizens Campaign for the Environment (516) 390-7150 aesposito@citizenscampaign.org.

Sincerely,

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President
1 in 9

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Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester

Margaret Roberts
Board Member
Capital Region Action Against Breast Cancer
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Program Director
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