



# PPC

**PESTICIDE POLICY COALITION**  
A Coalition Working for Sound Pest Management Policies

Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow  
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition & Forestry  
328-A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member John Boozman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition & Forestry  
328-A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

March 18, 2021

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Boozman,

The members of the Pesticide Policy Coalition represent a wide range of groups who produce our nation's food, fiber, biofuel and protect public health and infrastructure. We appreciate the opportunity to provide a statement for the record for the Senate Agriculture Committee hearing on March 11, 2021 regarding, "Farmers and Foresters: Opportunities to Lead in Tackling Climate Change." A growing body of evidence demonstrates how a changing climate affects plant disease pathogenicity, pest pressure from endemic and invasive insects, and often weakens crop resiliency and their ability to respond to the biotic and abiotic stresses. We are encouraged by recent discussions and descriptions of voluntary, incentive-based approaches to bring all of agriculture to the table to produce more sustainably and efficiently. We believe agriculture will be part of the solution in reducing net carbon gas and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Technological innovations in fertilizers, pesticides and plant breeding have significantly improved farmer efficiency, increasing yields, making it possible to grow more while using fewer acres compared to what would have been necessary for the same yields just 10-20 years earlier. Herbicides coupled with plant genetic traits have allowed more farmers to embrace no- and minimum-till practices and plant cover crops leading to greater carbon sequestration, increased soil health, reduced soil moisture loss and prevented soil erosion. For example, a July 2020 study found that reduced and no-till soil management practices derived from U.S.-grown herbicide-tolerant soybeans, corn, and their companion herbicides managed to sequester enough greenhouse gasses and reduce tractor fuel use to remove the equivalent of 4.2 million cars from our roads in one year.<sup>1</sup> Systemic insecticides that protect plants from pest insects, prevent food loss and waste and their longer efficacy means less fossil fuels are used due to the need for fewer applications. However, we believe these technological advances are just the tip of the iceberg and we must be clear-minded with the goal at hand, which is to produce the necessary food,

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<sup>1</sup> Brookes, Graham, and Peter Barfoot. July 24, 2020. "Environmental impacts of genetically modified (GM) crop use 1996–2018: impacts on pesticide use and carbon emissions." *GM Crops & Food*.  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21645698.2020.1773198>

fiber and biofuel and to protect the public from ever more disease vectoring pests while swiftly reducing GHG emissions and increasing agriculture's capacity to sequester and maintain soil carbon.

We must embrace science-based, and data-supported innovations without prejudice. Climate smart practices might come in the form of novel cultural practices, new crop varieties, and inputs like advanced pesticides. We ask the Committee to remain open-minded and neutral to the practices and products that will help the agricultural community make important advancements in the effort to address a changing climate. We will fall short of the goals we all share if innovation is stifled due to precautionary regulatory mechanisms or subjective notions of what climate smart practices should look like.

We ask that you support innovation led by our members and to empower American farmers in their efforts to address this critical issue. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide our comments for the record.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Hensley".

Steve Hensley  
Chair, Pesticide Policy Coalition

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beau Greenwood".

Beau Greenwood  
Vice Chair, Pesticide Policy Coalition