May 15, 2019

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Executive Chamber
Capitol Building
Albany, N.Y. 12224

RE: S.5343 (Kaminsky)/A.2477-B (Englebright)

Dear Governor Cuomo,

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter urges you to sign into law S.5343/A.2477-B, an act to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to prohibiting the use of chlorpyrifos.

This legislation would ban the use of chlorpyrifos, a potent pesticide used commonly in the United States that attacks the nervous systems of insects. But this powerful neurotoxin, similar to sarin gas, can also cause brain damage in children and induce nausea, dizziness, confusion, and at very high exposures (e.g., accidents or major spills), respiratory paralysis and death.

In New York, despite the existence of safer alternatives, chlorpyrifos is widely used on corn, soybeans, and apples, as well as other common row crops. Chlorpyrifos is also used on golf courses, in landscaping applications and for mosquito control, despite ample evidence that the environmental and public health risks far outweigh the benefits.

For years, physicians and environmental groups have pushed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to ban chlorpyrifos, as it has presented an unacceptable risk to human health and ecosystems. After several lawsuits and comprehensive scientific studies, the EPA issued a revised human health risk assessment in November 2016, laying the groundwork for a nation-wide chlorpyrifos ban. The U.S. EPA was expected to make a decision by Mar. 31, 2017, under a court-ordered deadline, but, then-EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt delayed EPA’s proposed ban, and put off any decision about chlorpyrifos until 2022. On August 9, 2018, the U.S. 9th Circuit court of Appeals ruled that the EPA must ban chlorpyrifos within 60 days from that date, but the EPA appears determined to drag out the timeline indefinitely with appeals.
New York State cannot allow corrupt and baseless determinations from the Trump administration to delay critical public health policy. **We are urging you to act immediately and sign S.5343/A.2477-B into law to fill this void in federal leadership. Banning chlorpyrifos in New York will end the sad legacy of this crippling neurotoxin on public health and ecosystems and set an example for other states to follow.** Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Roger Downs  
Conservation Director  
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter