



Clean Water Action News

May/June 2002

Pennsylvania Newsletter

GOOD NEWS FOR PENNSYLVANIA STUDENTS!

This issue of Clean Water Action News is devoted to the recent passage of our Pesticide Notification Act, a landmark bill protecting children and school staff from unnecessary exposure to toxic pesticides in school.

As of January 1, 2003, all public school districts will be required to implement three new protections to make our schools safer for students and staff.

First, public schools must adopt IPM — Integrated Pest Management. IPM is a less toxic approach to pest control that focuses on prevention instead of pesticide use.

Second, pesticide spraying will be prohibited in school buildings when students will be present in the building within 7 hours. Spraying is also prohibited on school grounds when students will be in or near the area to be treated within 7 hours.

Finally, public schools will be required to notify all school employees of upcoming pesticide applications. Districts will also be required to notify either all parents or a list of parents

requesting such a notice. Notices must be distributed at least 72 hours before the pesticide application. Signs must also be posted in the building and near the portion of the grounds to be sprayed.

This is one of the strongest school pesticide laws of any state in the country. It has already become a model for similar efforts in New Jersey and other states.



Above, from left: TJ Gobreski, Clean Water Action; Sen. Stewart Greenleaf, (R-Montgomery), prime sponsor of SB 705; Robert Wendelgass, Clean Water Action; Christine Knapp, Clean Water Action

Our victory was made possible by the help of thousands of Clean Water Action members who sent nearly 10,000 letters to their elected officials during the years we fought to get the bill passed.

Clean Water Action's door to door and phone canvasses also played huge roles, helping educate our members and

generate the letters to politicians.

Thanks to everyone for your support over the years. Your letters and financial support made this victory possible!



PHOTO GALLERY: PNA Friends & Supporters

On May 7, key supporters of the Pesticide Notification Act gathered in Harrisburg with our legislative sponsors to celebrate passage of the Act. The celebration included awards to Sen. Stewart Greenleaf and Rep. Carole Rubley, the prime sponsors of our legislation, and public acknowledgment of some of the key figures in the campaign for passage of the Act.

The photos below show some scenes from the celebration. Among the participants pictured are three parents whose children were affected by pesticides in schools. Their personal stories helped legislators see the impact pesticide poisoning has on families. In addition, some of the key groups in the campaign for the legislation are pictured.

Other groups who have been active in the campaign who are not shown include the American Lung Association, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Clean Air Council, the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, Penna. Council of Churches and Sierra Club.

We thank all of these groups and the one hundred more who endorsed the Act for their hard work in helping win its passage. The coalition we built included education groups, religious organizations, environmental and public health groups, labor unions and more. This diversity helped convince legislators that the Pesticide Notification Act had broad support throughout the state.



At left:: Bob Wendelgass, Clean Water Action; Michael and Connie Eash; Christine and Ethan Weidner, Christa and Carol Fanelli

Below, from left: Tomi Waters Boylstein, Penna. PTA; Rep. Carole Rubley, (R-Chester), Prime Sponsor of HB 1289; Eric Pauley, Legislative Assistant to Sen. Stewart Greenleaf, (R-Montgomery), Prime Sponsor of SB 705; Robert Wendelgass, Clean Water Action

Below: Patsy Tallarico, Penna. State Education Association; Rep. Carole Rubley, (R-Chester)



NEXT STEPS IN PROTECTING OUR KIDS

Now that the Pesticide Notification Act has been passed, public school districts have until January 1, 2003 to implement it.

To do this, each school district will have to do two things:

- ◆ Adopt an IPM plan for the district's buildings and grounds;
- ◆ Decide who to notify about pesticide applications and set up the notification system.

Clean Water Action will be working with parents, teachers and school districts around the state to make sure that the Act is implemented fully in every school district.

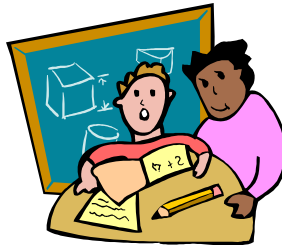
We will be working with the state and with local school boards to help districts adopt good IPM plans that minimize the use of pesticides. We will also be working with school districts to convince them to make the right choice on parental notification.

Under the Act, school districts can choose either to notify all parents using normal school communications, or they can set up a registry of parents who request notification. If schools decide to set up a registry, they must notify all parents of their right to request notification.

Clean Water Action believes that notifying all parents is better for parents...and cheaper and simpler for school districts. We will be working with the state PTA and other groups to

encourage all school districts to adopt this universal notification. If a district decides not to notify all parents, we'll then work with parents in the district to encourage as many parents as possible to request notification.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: You can help encourage your district to make the right choice. Write to the Superintendent of your school district, and encourage him or her to select universal notification for pesticide applications. Explain that universal notification is easier, cheaper and works better...and is more protective of children's health.

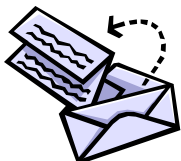


Also, in your letter you should say that if your district decides not to notify all parents, you would like to be on the list for notification. Ask the district to consider your letter as your formal request to be placed on the registry; or, if they won't, to send you materials on how to sign up.

Include your name and address in your letter, along with the schools your children attend. Ask for a reply; and when you get one, send it to the CWA office nearest you so we can keep track of what school districts are doing.

A sample letter you can use follows at the bottom of this page. Be sure to write...and get others to write too. Making sure school districts do the right thing is the next step in protecting our children's health.

SAMPLE LETTER



Dear Superintendent,

I am writing to request that our school district agree to notify all parents of children in a school that is scheduled to be treated with pesticides.

I know that under the new Pesticide Notification Act, public schools are required to notify parents when children could be exposed to pesticides in their school.

If you choose not to notify all parents, please consider this my request for notification. Thank you.

(Include your NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE # and SCHOOLS YOUR CHILDREN ATTEND. Ask for a reply.)



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Clean Water Action is a national citizen's organization working for clean, safe and affordable water, prevention of health threatening pollution, creation of environmentally safe jobs and businesses, and empowerment of people to make democracy work. Clean Water Action organizes strong grassroots groups, coalitions and campaigns to protect our environment, health, economic well being and community quality of life. This update was prepared for our Pennsylvania members who contribute at the sustaining member level of \$60 or more.

A SETBACK IN PROTECTING OUR RIGHT TO KNOW

On May 22, the state Environmental Quality Board (EQB) defeated an amendment from Rep. Bud George (D-Clearfield) to strengthen our right to know when our water is not safe to drink. But the fight's not over yet!

The Public Notification Rule, tells utilities how to notify consumers when our water fails state standards. DEP's new changes speed up notice of some violations, but it will increase the time allowed for utilities to notify us if a toxic chemical or cancer causing chemical is found at unsafe levels in our water. **Utilities could now take as long as 30 days to warn us!**

CWA pushed the EQB to require utilities to notify the media within 24 hours any time our water fails state standards. But after lots of lobbying by water utilities, our

amendment was defeated. However, the fight's not over yet. Now, we're working with Rep. George to introduce a bill that would require 24 hour notice to the media. We'll keep you posted on progress.



WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Write to the members of the EQB listed below. Tell them you're disappointed they voted against the amendment to the Public Notification Rule that would have required utilities to notify the media of all Tier 1 and 2 violations within 24 hours. Include your name and address and ask them to explain why.

Write To:

Sen. Ralph Musto
 Sen. Mary Jo White

at the Main Capitol, Harrisburg
 PA 17120.

