

# Pesticides are an Environmental Justice Issue

## BIPOC AND LOW-INCOME AMERICANS ARE EXPERIENCING DISPROPORTIONATE EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDES



A comprehensive research review shows that 12 dangerous pesticides, tracked over the past 20 years, were found in the blood and urine of Black and Mexican-Americans at levels up to five times greater than White people.\*

**HB24-1178 would give local governments the tools to address these disproportionate exposures through ordinances and regulations that balance the on-the-ground needs to control pests, while also improving public health. A community could provide targeted solutions to reducing exposures while abiding by existing federal and state laws.**

**Sponsors: Representatives Kipp and Froelich, and Senators Cutter and Jaquez Lewis**

### WHY?

#### Unequal burdens and risks

BIPOC communities have a higher proportion of people who work in sectors where pesticides are applied, live in rentals, and in some parts of the country, live in the most polluting pesticide manufacturing areas.

#### Pesticides and housing

Studies in other states found that pesticides are regularly applied to 80% of public housing units, and one study detected six pesticides in dust samples in over half of the housing units, which were occupied by 98% Black and Hispanic residents.\* Similar studies are lacking in Colorado, leaving a significant gap in our understanding of the risks to public housing residents.

#### Different regulations for workers and the public

An estimated 10,000 to 20,000 predominately Hispanic farm workers fall ill each year due to pesticide exposure. Workers can carry pesticide residues on their clothing and shoes into their homes, exposing their children and families.

#### Long-term impacts

Chronic pesticide exposure is associated with adverse and cumulative health impacts, including cancers, diabetes, learning and cognitive issues including IQ loss, neurodegenerative disorders like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), birth defects, and reproductive disorders.

### What can elected officials do?

- State and local officials can't change federal pesticide regulations including worker protections, but they can develop incentives to reduce exposure to vulnerable communities.
- Provide incentives to reduce pesticide exposures by supporting funding and programs for regenerative agriculture and native plant landscaping, and Integrated Pest Management programs in public housing and schools.
- Provide funding to monitor pesticide body burdens or indoor pesticide exposures for the people at the most risk for pesticide exposure through their jobs and homes.

### How local governments and pest control professionals can help

- Local governments can reduce the use of pesticides on their own properties and develop ecologically friendly landscaping practices to protect children and grounds workers from unnecessary pesticide exposure.
- Local governments and pest control professionals can partner to develop and implement Integrated Pest Management\*\* guidelines for public housing, daycares and schools to pest-proof buildings and reduce pesticide exposure.
- Restoration of local government pesticide regulation can encourage targeted programs and services to reduce pesticide exposures for the most vulnerable communities.

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\* US PESTICIDE REGULATION IS FAILING THE HARDEST-HIT COMMUNITIES. IT'S TIME TO FIX IT.

\*\* INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR SCHOOLS

# SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATIONS



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