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Learning Disabilities Association of America says EPA Decision not to Ban Dangerous Pesticide Ignores Established Science and Puts Children at Greater Risk for Learning, Attention, and Behavior Disorders

Pittsburgh, PA, March 30, 2017 -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) decision to allow the dangerous pesticide chlorpyrifos to continue to be used on farm fields and crops puts children and future generations at greater risk of learning and developmental disabilities, attention and behavior disorders, according to the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA).

In 2016, a group of nearly 50 eminent scientists, health professionals, and children's health advocates issued a statement that identified organophosphate pesticides, like chlorpyrifos, as chemicals for which there is clear and substantial scientific evidence of harm to children's brain development. The "[TENDR \(Targeting Environmental NeuroDevelopmental Risks\) Statement](#)" concluded that exposure to these pesticides is widespread, including among pregnant women and children, and is increasing children's risks for brain-based disorders, such as learning disabilities, IQ deficits, autism, and ADHD.

Maureen Swanson, Director of LDA's Healthy Children Project, convened the process that led to the TENDR Statement, along with Dr. Irva Hertz-Picciotto, University of California, Davis. "This pesticide does lasting harm to babies' brains, leaving children, parents and schools struggling to deal with life-long effects on learning, attention, and behavior," Swanson said. "EPA has abdicated its responsibility to protect our most vulnerable citizens from toxic chemicals."

On average, it costs twice as much to educate a child with a learning or developmental disability as it does to educate a child without one. Adolescents with learning disabilities are much more likely to drop out of high school, have problems with substance abuse, and wind up in the juvenile justice system when not provided the supports and accommodations to remediate their learning disabilities. High school graduates with learning disabilities are much more likely to be unemployed and have trouble keeping a job.

During fetal development and early childhood, even extremely low levels of toxic chemicals like chlorpyrifos can interfere with healthy brain development. Scientific studies of pregnant women and children that assessed prenatal exposures to chlorpyrifos, and then tested children as infants and as they moved into elementary school, found loss of IQ points, problems with working memory, attention disorders, and developmental delays.

Acting on the scientific evidence, EPA banned residential use of this insecticide in 2000 but allowed its continued use in agriculture. Chlorpyrifos is widely used in the U.S., sprayed on crops such as apples, oranges, strawberries, and other foods children regularly eat. EPA has found that all exposures to chlorpyrifos through food exceed safe levels. Studies show that

when chlorpyrifos is sprayed on farm fields, the pesticide is carried into nearby homes and schools, where it collects in indoor air and dust.

Learning disabilities can affect the ability to read, write, speak, or complete math and can impair one's ability to build social relationships. Deficits in basic reading skills are the most common forms of learning disabilities. Learning disabilities can occur along with, and be complicated by, attention disorders and problems with the development of social skills.

The Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) is a non-profit organization of parents, professionals, and adults with learning disabilities providing support, information, and advocacy on behalf of individuals with learning disabilities. For further information go to ldaamerica.org.