

**Earthjustice \* League of Conservation Voters \* Natural Resources Defense Council \*  
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations \* San Francisco Baykeeper \*  
Center for Biological Diversity \* Clean Water Action \* Defenders of Wildlife \*  
Greenpeace \* Beyond Pesticides \* Southern Environmental Law Center \*  
Sierra Club \* Friends of the Earth**

**RE: Oppose H.R. 897 (“Zika Vector Control Act”)**

May 16, 2016

Dear Representative,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we urge you to oppose H.R. 897 (“Zika Vector Control Act”), which would eliminate Clean Water Act safeguards that protect our waterways and communities from excessive pesticide pollution. The Pesticide General Permit targeted in this legislation has been in place for nearly five years now and alarmist predictions by pesticide manufacturers and others about the impacts of this permit have failed to bear any fruit.<sup>1</sup>

**This bill is the same legislation that pesticide manufacturers and other special interests have been pushing for years. It will not improve nor impact spraying to combat Zika virus, contrary to the new, last-minute title given to the bill.** The Pesticide General Permit at issue allows for spraying to combat vector-borne diseases such as Zika and the West Nile virus. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the permit “provides that pesticide applications are covered automatically under the permit and may be performed immediately for any declared emergency pest situations” (emphasis added).<sup>2</sup>

Further, repealing the Pesticide General Permit – as this damaging legislation seeks to do – would allow pesticides to be discharged into water bodies without any meaningful oversight since the federal pesticide registration law (the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)) does not require tracking of such applications.

Now that the Pesticide General Permit is in place, the public is finally getting information that they couldn't obtain before about the types of pesticides being sprayed or discharged into local bodies of water. All across the country, pesticide applicators are complying with the Pesticide General Permit to protect water quality without issue.

Further, the Pesticide General Permit has no significant effect on farming practices. The permit in no way affects land applications of pesticides for the purpose of controlling pests. Irrigation return flows

---

<sup>1</sup> See testimony of Ken Kopocis, Deputy Assist. Administrator, Office of Water, U.S. Env'tl. Prot. Agency, before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (March 18, 2015): “We have not been made aware of any issues associated with the Pesticide General Permit. Nobody has brought an instance to our attention where somebody has not been able to apply a pesticide in a timely manner . . . [t]here have been no instances. We've been getting very good data. . . .” *available at* <http://transportation.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=398705>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Env'tl. Prot. Agency, Pesticide General Permit Factsheet: Mosquito Control Activities, *available at* [http://www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/pgp\\_factsheet\\_mosquitocontrol.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/pgp_factsheet_mosquitocontrol.pdf)

and agricultural stormwater runoff do not require permits, even when they contain pesticides. Existing agricultural exemptions in the Clean Water Act remain.

**Nearly 150 human health, fishing, environmental, and other organizations have opposed efforts like H.R. 897 that would undermine Clean Water Act permitting for direct pesticide applications to waterways.** We attach a list of these groups for your reference, as well as a one-page fact sheet with more information on the issue.

The Pesticide General Permit simply lays out commonsense practices for applying pesticides directly to waters that currently fall under the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. Efforts to block this permit are highly controversial, as evidenced by the attached list of groups opposed.

**Please protect the health of your state's citizens and all Americans by opposing H.R. 897.**

Sincerely,

Earthjustice  
League of Conservation Voters  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations  
Sierra Club  
San Francisco Baykeeper  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Clean Water Action  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Greenpeace  
Beyond Pesticides  
Friends of the Earth