

Thousands of pesticides dodge US regulation

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A helicopter spreads pesticide on August 15, 2005 in Los Angeles, California. Thousands of pesticides are allowed onto the US market without rigorous safety testing, putting people, animals and crop pollinators like bees at risk, a US environmental group said Wednesday.

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The [Natural Resources Defense](#) Council said the culprit is a congressional loophole dating back to 1978, which has allowed the

[Environmental Protection Agency](#) to approve more than 10,000 pesticides with minimal testing.

This "conditional registration" was meant for rare cases—such as a disease outbreak or a public health crisis—but instead has been used for 65 percent of the 16,000 pesticides on the market, the NRDC said.

"One of the problems we also realized was that the EPA's database is a mess," said Mae Wu, an attorney at NRDC who has spent two years on the group's latest investigation.

"They weren't tracking the conditional registrations properly at all," she told reporters, noting that the public was never involved in the vetting process and supposed temporary pesticides were falling into a "black hole."

The NRDC highlighted two products that have made it to market without rigorous toxicity testing—a germ-killer, known as [nanosilver](#), used in textiles and clothing and clothianidin, a pesticide that endangers bees.

The group urged the EPA to review all its conditionally registered pesticides, cancel the registrations for nanosilver and clothianidin, and start a publicly searchable database of approved pesticides.

When asked for comment, the EPA sent AFP a statement saying it "is working aggressively to protect bees and other [pollinators](#) from pesticide risks through regulatory, voluntary and research programs."

The EPA is also "accelerating the schedule for registration review of the neonicotinoid pesticides because of uncertainties about these pesticides and their potential effects on bees," it said.

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