

Critics attack Brazil's 'poison law' on pesticides

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Critics including supermodel Gisele Bundchen are attacking a push to loosen Brazil's regulations on pesticides, calling the proposed legislation a "poison law."

The changes to the regulations over pesticides in Latin America's agriculture giant were being examined Wednesday in a congressional committee.

The [bill](#) calls for streamlining approval for pesticides, putting the entire responsibility with the agriculture ministry. Currently, the health and environment ministries must give the green light to products.

Under the new law, the current description of pesticides as "agro-toxics" would be changed to "phytosanitary products" and "environmental control products."

The powerful agribusiness lobby in Congress has thrown its weight behind the legislation, which was first proposed by Agriculture Minister Blairo Maggi when he was a senator. Maggi is also one of Brazil's biggest soybean magnates.

Supporters of the draft law say it will make Brazil more competitive as it builds on its already dominant position in Latin America as an agricultural powerhouse and one of China's biggest suppliers of food.

However, what critics call a law promoting poison has come under fire

from environmental campaign group Greenpeace, activists such as Bundchen, as well as prosecutors and many legislators.

"The bill authorizes considerable use of pesticides, with more poison in our food and more damage to our health and the environment," Bundchen tweeted.

There is also outspoken opposition from within the country's authorities.

The national health surveillance agency said the bill would result in there being "no more evaluation and classification of products," with pesticides instead being rubber-stamped into approval.

The prosecutor general's office said the bill will "loosen the control on the products to the detriment of [health](#) and the environment."

Brazil has been the world's biggest pesticides market since 2008, mostly in the production of soy, sugar cane, maize and cotton.

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