

California defies White House to ban controversial pesticide

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California will outlaw the use of a pesticide linked to developmental problems in humans after President Donald Trump's administration scrapped plans for a nationwide ban, state health officials said Wednesday.

The decision to ban chlorpyrifos in the agriculturally rich state follows "mounting evidence" of serious health effects for exposed children and other [vulnerable people](#), two California health agencies said in a statement.

Toxic effects including "impaired brain and neurological development" occur at lower levels of the pesticide than previously thought, said the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR).

Farmers using the product will have 15 days to challenge the ban notice in court before it comes into effect, the DPR told AFP.

Virtually all residential uses of the pesticide has been banned since the end of 2001 throughout the United States.

In 2015, the Obama administration announced that it intended to ban its use completely.

The measure had not yet come into effect when President Donald Trump was elected, and the Environmental Protection Agency reversed the

decision in 2017.

"California continues to move forward to protect public health, workers and the environment" despite the Trump administration's move, the statement said.

In California alone, more than 940,000 pounds of chlorpyrifos were used in 2017—about half as much as in 2005.

New working groups will be set up to find safer alternatives to the pesticide commonly used for [citrus fruits](#), almonds, cotton, grapes, nuts, alfalfa and other crops.

The European Commission announced this month it will recommend chlorpyrifos does not have its license renewed when it expires in January, following a negative assessment by the EU's food safety watchdog.

Eight European countries have already individually banned products containing the pesticide.

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