

Pesticide White Paper
Funding for Statewide Weed Control Coordination Program,
Pesticide Applicator Training and Certification Program
(Including EPA's proposed changes), and
Pesticide programs

October 2015

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed significant changes in training and certification affecting all permitted or licensed pesticide applicators and state certification programs. Montana's pesticide training and certification programs were underfunded before these additional responsibilities were proposed. In addition to our pesticide programs, our statewide weed control coordination program needs an ongoing funding source.

The 2015 Montana Legislature funded our statewide weed control coordination program for two years with Department of Environmental Quality remediation funds on a one time only basis. The 2015 Montana Legislature directed the Department to bring forth legislation in 2017 to fund this program with an increase in pesticide registration fees for companies registering products in Montana.

Other pesticide related programs, e.g., licensing, registration, compliance and enforcement, waste pesticide disposal and pesticide container recycling, are also struggling financially. After twenty years, it is necessary to consider a fee increase(s) to support pesticide related functions and services.

The Department believes it is critical to engage the industry as we consider changes to run effective pesticide and weed control coordination programs. The Director has already had conversations with major chemical companies and the department is having conversations with industry leaders to find the right balance between increased registration fees for the chemical companies, license fees for commercial and government applicators, permit fees for private applicators, and program costs. Adequate funding for both statewide weed control coordination and pesticide applicator training and certification will require the legislature to examine and enact changes in state statute.

The Montana Department of Agriculture will focus on running these programs in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible. This will allow Montana's pesticide registration fees to stay within the median when compared to other states, even after a moderate fee increase is imposed. We look forward to working with the industry, commercial, government, and private applicators, and legislators throughout this entire process to find satisfactory solutions for all the stakeholders.