

Use of EPA Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs) in Support of Pesticide Safety Education A Statement of the National Stakeholder Team for Pesticide Safety Education Program Funding

Pesticide safety education is the critical mechanism by which certified pesticide applicators and their employees become and remain competent to use and handle pesticides. Land-grant university Pesticide Safety Education Programs educate pesticide applicators directly with training events and the resources they develop. They also reach applicators indirectly by providing training and resources to state regulatory agencies, industry representatives, grower groups, trade associations, private trainers, and university county agents and specialists. In addition, these programs impact more than one million pesticide users in the general public each year. Thus, Pesticide Safety Education Programs have the central role in ensuring that pesticide applicators protect human health, prevent/reduce pollution and promote environmental compliance. It is the responsibility of all pesticide stakeholders, including U.S. EPA, to assist in this effort.

EPA Civil Enforcement Actions: Settlement Agreements and Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs)

A supplemental environmental project (SEP) is an environmentally beneficial project which a violator voluntarily agrees to perform (fund) as part of an enforcement action settlement. A SEP furthers EPA's goals of protecting/enhancing human health and the environment. As part of a settlement agreement, EPA can negotiate with the violator for financial assistance to support a university-based pesticide safety education compliance promotion project. These projects are typically intended to inform and educate members of the regulated community. Education, outreach and compliance assistance training programs, which are sponsored by pesticide safety educators, can help all members of the regulated community comply with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), thus directly benefiting the environment and human health.

Once a violator voluntarily agrees to perform an environmentally beneficial project as part of an enforcement action settlement, it is vital that the project be relevant, important and capable of providing great impact in achieving these EPA goals. Pesticide Safety Education Programs share these goals and are perfectly positioned to maximize impact. Of the various categories of EPA-listed SEPs, pesticide safety education training can help address most if not all the categories through settlement agreements with violators.

State-negotiated settlements using SEPs also exist. For example, the State of Illinois offers violators an opportunity to agree to undertake environmental education and public awareness, which includes providing financial assistance to educators and the community for a pollution prevention workshop. Information can be found at: <http://www.epa.state.il.us/enforcement/sep/>.

Recommendations of the National Stakeholder Team for Pesticide Safety Education Program Funding

- U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP), Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA), and Office of Civil Enforcement (OCE) officially recognize the concept of using SEPs to support appropriate FIFRA pesticide education activities
- U.S. EPA OPP work with representatives of the National Stakeholder Team to:
 - a) make national and regional OECA/OCE staff aware of these FIFRA SEP opportunities
 - b) identify and implement any action steps necessary to make Pesticide Safety Education Programs a first consideration for appropriate future SEPs