



**Statement of the
Council of Producers & Distributors of Agrotechnology**

TO THE U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

“PAST BREAKTHROUGHS AND FUTURE INNOVATIONS IN CROP PRODUCTION”

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Presented by:

Council of Producers & Distributors of Agrotechnology (CPDA)
4201 Wilson Blvd.
Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22203

Written Testimony of Terry Abbott

Chairman, Council of Producers & Distributors of Agrotechnology (CPDA)
Senior Product Portfolio Manager, Adjuvants Unlimited

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Craig, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Council of Producers and Distributors of Agrotechnology (CPDA). CPDA is the premier advocate for the agrotechnology industry, representing formulators, distributors, manufacturers, and suppliers of adjuvants, inert ingredients, and post-patent pesticide products. Our members comprise a nationwide network that accounts for nearly 90 percent of the \$15 billion U.S. crop protection market. For nearly four decades, CPDA has worked to advance science-based regulatory policies that protect the environment, foster innovation, and preserve growers' access to the tools they need to farm productively and sustainably.

I also serve as Senior Product Portfolio Manager at Adjuvants Unlimited, a company that develops and supplies advanced tank mix adjuvant and inert technologies to improve pesticide performance, application efficiency, and environmental stewardship in the field.

Innovation Begins with Access

Innovation in agriculture is ultimately measured by what reaches the farm gate. Scientific discovery, new formulations, and improved application technologies only deliver value when farmers can access them. That includes not just brand-new active ingredients, but also post-patent products, adjuvants, and inert ingredients that expand choices and enhance stewardship.

Post-patent pesticides play a vital role in maintaining a competitive marketplace. These are proven technologies with well-understood profiles, and they provide growers with the ability to select the products that best fit their crop, rotation, and environmental conditions. Ensuring continued access to these products is critical to supporting choice, flexibility, and cost-effective pest management strategies.

At the same time, innovation is increasingly found beyond the active ingredient. Adjuvants improve spray deposition, reduce drift, enable tank mix compatibility, and help growers meet complex label and environmental requirements. Inert ingredients enhance the performance of a formulation by helping ensure the active ingredient reaches the target site effectively, remains stable, and performs as intended under real-world conditions. These are not optional components. They are essential to making crop protection products function as intended.

Yet access to these tools is increasingly threatened by regulatory delays and uncertainty. Many post-patent products and formulation improvements are caught in the same backlog as new chemistries, limiting grower access to trusted options and stalling innovation across the board.

Regulatory Delays and the Backlog at EPA OPP

Today, more than half a billion dollars in CPDA member products are stuck in regulatory review at the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP). These delays slow innovation, increase costs, and reduce access to more sustainable solutions.

The Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA) was designed to deliver timely and predictable reviews. In exchange for user fees, industry receives target timelines for decisions. But today those timelines are routinely missed. EPA's own data shows that the vast majority of actions are overdue.

While EPA has taken steps under Administrator Lee Zeldin to improve internal coordination and streamline certain review processes, significant challenges remain. The registration backlog, though showing signs of stabilization, still affects hundreds of pending actions. Longstanding issues including limited staff capacity, outdated information systems, and insufficient funding continue to delay access to critical tools and undermine regulatory predictability.

Congress can and should address this. CPDA strongly supports full funding for the Office of Pesticide Programs, including the \$166 million annual minimum authorized under PRIA V. That level of funding is not a wish list, it reflects the basic capacity EPA has said it needs to meet its statutory and workload obligations. Without it, the system breaks down. Farmers, innovators, and the environment all lose.

A well-funded OPP benefits everyone. It creates predictability for companies investing in research and development. It allows EPA to hire and retain the scientists and reviewers necessary to evaluate products thoroughly and efficiently. And it ensures that U.S. farmers have timely access to the crop protection tools they need to remain competitive globally.

Elevating the Role of Adjuvants in Stewardship and Conservation

While much of the public debate focuses on active ingredients, some of the most promising innovation today lies in how those products are used. Adjuvants are among the most cost-effective tools for enhancing stewardship. They reduce off-target movement, improve coverage, increase tank mix stability, and help deliver lower use rates while maintaining efficacy. They are especially valuable in achieving compliance with drift mitigation requirements and buffer zones established under new label language and emerging ESA strategies.

Yet federal conservation programs and risk mitigation strategies have not kept pace. Most NRCS conservation practice standards do not properly incentivize the use of adjuvants, even when they clearly contribute to risk reduction and environmental benefit.

CPDA urges Congress to direct the Natural Resources Conservation Service to update conservation practice standards to reflect current adjuvant and application technologies. We also recommend establishing a Conservation Title pilot program that offers incentives for growers who incorporate drift reduction adjuvants or other optimization tools into their conservation practices. These relatively small investments can yield significant environmental returns.

In addition, CPDA supports increased federal investment in applied research and demonstration projects through Land Grant Universities and regional Centers of Excellence. These centers can serve as innovation hubs for testing new spray technologies, validating application strategies, and supporting farmer adoption through education and outreach.

Addressing the Technical Assistance Gap

As conservation and stewardship expectations increase, farmers need timely, site-specific guidance to implement effective practices. Technical Service Providers (TSPs) are an important part of that support system, helping producers design and apply conservation plans that meet agronomic, environmental, and regulatory goals.

CPDA supports the steps USDA has taken to address this issue, including the Memorandum of Understanding that expanded opportunities for non-federal entities to assist with TSP training and certification. This effort has helped improve flexibility and expand capacity.

To build on this progress, CPDA supports the bipartisan Increased TSP Access Act, which would codify and streamline these improvements to ensure long-term consistency. By allowing more organizations to participate in training and credentialing, the bill would expand the pool of qualified providers and improve the delivery of conservation programs. It is a smart, scalable approach that helps farmers get the technical assistance they need while supporting the broader goals of the conservation title.

CPDA urges Congress to include this bipartisan proposal in the upcoming Farm Bill and ensure that farmers have the support they need to implement important conservation practices.

Advancing Practical ESA Compliance

One of the most consequential regulatory shifts underway involves the Endangered Species Act. After years of litigation, EPA is now integrating ESA consultation into pesticide registration decisions.

EPA has proposed a suite of strategies such as the Vulnerable Species Pilot and broader herbicide and insecticide strategies that aim to reduce risk to listed species through broader use restrictions and mitigation. But many of these approaches rely on buffers or prohibitions that may not reflect actual risk or real-world application practices.

There is a better path. CPDA believes that practical mitigation, especially through technologies like drift reduction adjuvants, appropriate nozzle use, and precision spray equipment should be at the center of EPA's ESA compliance strategy. These tools can reduce off-target movement without taking acres out of production or forcing farmers into costly programmatic detours. They are adaptable, proven, and scalable.

CPDA supports continued collaboration between EPA, USDA, technology developers, and grower groups to refine and expand the use of these mitigation tools. We also urge Congress to ensure that ESA compliance frameworks are transparent, consistent, and based on sound science.

Defending the Integrity of the U.S. Pesticide Regulatory System

The United States has the most scientifically rigorous and transparent pesticide regulatory system in the world. Led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), with support from USDA, FDA, and state agencies, this system is grounded in a risk-benefit framework that considers both

hazard and exposure, evaluates potential impacts to human health and the environment, and includes special protections for children and vulnerable populations. It is a system that works when it is properly resourced, consistently applied, and guided by science rather than rhetoric.

Crop protection products undergo extensive review under FIFRA and the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA). This includes multi-pathway risk assessments, ecological impact evaluations, drinking water safety modeling, and strict residue limits that are typically 100 times or more below levels shown to cause harm. Labels are legally enforceable, and product use is subject to regular oversight and compliance.

Unfortunately, the integrity of this system is being challenged by recent narratives that rely on emotion, misinformation, and flawed analysis. The MAHA Commission's initial report undermines trust in the regulatory process by citing unverifiable sources, omitting key stakeholder voices including farmers, food producers, and scientists, and making sweeping claims not grounded in the science or structure of the current system. Public discourse driven by such narratives risks weakening regulatory confidence and undermining evidence-based policymaking.

Science-based, risk-benefit regulation is not only compatible with protecting public health and the environment, it is essential to achieving those goals. Pesticides play a critical role in securing the food supply, enabling sustainable farming practices like conservation tillage, and protecting communities from disease-carrying pests. Global examples, such as the recent crisis in Sri Lanka, show what can happen when political decisions override agronomic and scientific expertise.

CPDA urges Congress and the Administration to reaffirm support for the U.S. regulatory framework and reject efforts to politicize or weaken it. That includes fully funding the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs, which is central to ensuring timely reviews, maintaining regulatory confidence, and enabling continued innovation. It also means ensuring that future iterations of the MAHA strategy meaningfully include agricultural stakeholders and respect the credibility of the nation's science-based institutions.

U.S. farmers, scientists, and public health professionals are united in their commitment to safe, effective, and responsible pesticide use. CPDA and our members are proud to be part of that shared commitment, and we remain focused on strengthening a system that protects both productivity and public trust.

Conclusion

Innovation in agriculture is not limited to new chemistries. It is also about how we use technology smarter, how we deliver stewardship more efficiently, and how we make regulatory systems work better for farmers and the environment alike. CPDA appreciates the Committee's continued focus on these issues and welcomes the opportunity to contribute solutions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions and to continued collaboration as Congress works to advance agricultural innovation and support the farmers who

make it possible.