



# Pesticide Update

EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention

## **EPA Provides an Update on Pesticide Applicator Certification Plan Approvals**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is providing an update on efforts to finalize review of submitted state, territory, tribal and federal agency certification programs for applicators of restricted use pesticides (RUPs). Requiring specific training to be applied, RUPs are not available for purchase or use by the general public. The [2017 Certification of Pesticide Applicators final rule](#) had set stronger standards for people who apply RUPs and required that states, territories, tribes and federal agencies with existing certification plans submit proposed modifications by March 4, 2020 to comply with the updated federal standards. As specified in the rule, existing certification plans remain in effect until EPA completes its reviews and approves the proposed plan modifications, or until those plans otherwise expire on March 4, 2022, whichever is earlier.

In cooperation with certification program administrators, EPA has completed 28 reviews of the 63 submitted plans from states, territories, and tribes. EPA acknowledges the challenges certification program administrators face to bring the existing plans into compliance within the timeframes specified in the 2017 rule. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency and the need for careful review of program-specific issues and questions, EPA is in the process of developing a rule that would extend the date by which plans must be approved and ensure existing plans can remain in place during this time-limited extension. Prior to October 1, 2021, EPA had been unable to take any action to revise the certification rule due to a prohibition of such in the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act of 2018 (PRIA 4). Further, litigation over attempted delays to the effective date of the January 4, 2017 final rule led some certifying authorities to postpone work on revising their certification plans.

The anticipated extension would allow RUP applicators to continue to obtain the training and certifications they need to use RUPs under the existing certification plans, preventing the economic and public health consequences of widespread disruption of RUP use.

EPA will keep close contact with states, territories, tribes and other federal agencies who have a role in implementing the certification programs to provide support and guidance in meeting the regulatory deadline. EPA will also communicate any changes as soon as more information is available.