



October 9, 2018

Linsey Walsh
OPP Docket
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA/DC) (28221T)
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW.
Washington, DC 20460-0001

Subject: Dichlobenil – Proposed Interim Registration Review Decision (EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0395)

Dear Ms. Walsh:

On behalf of the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA), we thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed interim registration review decision for the herbicide and root control chemical dichlobenil. BACWA's members include 55 publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities ("POTWs") and collection system agencies serving 7.1 million San Francisco Bay Area residents. We take our responsibilities for safeguarding receiving waters seriously.

As you are well aware, BACWA is especially interested in the registration review for dichlobenil as it is an effective chemical commonly used to control root invasion in wastewater collection systems. Controlling roots prevents collection system blockages. Blockages can cause untreated wastewater to spill out of the collection system. However, as EPA noted in its proposed decision, dichlobenil (like other root control chemicals) has potential to pose safety hazards to POTW workers who enter affected collection system lines and can interfere with wastewater treatment operations. Notifying the downstream POTW at least 24 hours prior to dichlobenil wastewater collection system root control applications would provide time to take action to avoid these risks.

BACWA appreciates that the proposed decision includes a requirement to notify downstream POTWs about impending dichlobenil applications. We appreciate and support the requirements to inform the POTW of the quantity to be applied (essential for protection of POTW operations) and to notify POTWs about dichlobenil's process interference hazard, as some POTWs may not be aware of this risk. We thank your staff and the registrant for their joint efforts to address our requests for this new label language.

While we strongly support the proposed POTW notification requirement, as we explain in detail below, we request that the language be slightly modified to require POTW notification at least 24 hours prior to applications and to specifically address worker safety protection. Our suggested revisions to these elements of the proposed label language are shown in the box on the next page.

**Requested Modifications to Dichlobenil POTW Notification Label Instructions
(Based on Proposed Dichlobenil Label Language)**

"This product must be used only where wastewater treated for root control will be processed through a wastewater treatment facility. Applicators must notify downstream wastewater treatment facilities at least 24 hours prior to the start of dichlobenil applications so they can restrict staff from entering downstream collection system lines and may monitor the operations of the wastewater treatment plant. Applicators must report the location(s) of the application(s) and how much product will be applied to the sewage system to operators of downstream water treatment plants and ~~to~~ inform these operators that high concentrations of these chemicals in wastewater may adversely affect the biological sewage breakdown process in wastewater treatment plants and that workers should be restricted from accessing the manholes in and downstream of the treatment area."

Require POTW notification at least 24 hours prior to applications

A minimum of 24 hours between notification and the start of dichlobenil application is essential to provide POTWs with the time necessary to provide worker safety and operational protections. As proposed, the notification could occur as little as a few minutes before the dichlobenil application. With less than 24-hour notice, it is possible that workers could already be in the collection system when the dichlobenil application occurs. Labels for other root control pesticides will soon require a 24-hour advanced notice to the downstream POTW.¹

POTW notification requirement must mention worker safety

Due to the health risks associated with direct exposure to dichlobenil treatment solutions, it is imperative that collection system workers do not open and enter manholes in areas undergoing treatment. Treatment zones are so long that the root control chemical applicator is unable to view all manholes affected by the treatment, so it is not possible to guarantee worker safety through visual measures alone. Due to the paramount importance of our workers' safety, we urge EPA to ensure that the label notification requirements contains the information necessary to alert wastewater collection system agencies of the potential danger, so they can (mentions the need to) restrict workers from entering manholes and the collection system downstream from treatment areas.

Conclusion

Our goal in submitting this letter is to ensure that dichlobenil product label instructions provide the necessary time and information to be effective in protecting our treatment processes and our workers' safety. We thank EPA for the proposal to require prior notification to POTWs before dichlobenil root control applications. We support the proposed wording with the minor modifications detailed above.

If there is anything that our member agencies or our national association, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) can do to support to clarify our request or to discuss alternative language to meet our goals, please do not hesitate to contact us.

¹ See the Diquat Dibromide Proposed Interim Registration Review Decision, Case Number 0288, September 2016 (EPA-HQ-OPP-2009-0846)

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. If you have any questions, please contact BACWA's Project Managers:

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Respectfully Submitted,

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