Californians For Pesticide Reform

September 1, 2026

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Request for Signature — AB 1603 (Schultz)

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of our coalition which includes thousands of our members and supporters across California, Californians for Pesticide Reform, a co-sponsor of this bill, respectfully urges you to sign AB 1603 (Schultz) into law.

As amended on August 19, 2026, AB 1603 provides a practical, urgently needed first step to address a significant gap in California's oversight of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in pesticides. The bill would:

- Define PFAS pesticides using a science-based, class-based definition consistent with international scientific consensus and with definitions already used in California law (including previous PFAS legislation you signed), Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) regulations, the California Environmental Contaminant Biomonitoring Program, and 22 other states. This approach is *essential*.
- Require the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to identify in its Pesticide Use Reporting (PUR) database which pesticide products contain PFAS ingredients.
- Require DPR to identify PFAS as a category of interest in pesticide use reports and other relevant reporting documents, including associated PFAS pesticide-use trends.

California currently uses 53 of the 70 PFAS pesticides registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, but DPR does not clearly identify these products in the PUR database or report their use as a category. Although PFAS pesticides represent only about 2% of California's 176 million pounds of pesticide active ingredients applied in 2023[1] their impacts are disproportionate.

PFAS are often called "forever chemicals" because they can persist in the environment for decades or centuries. PFAS are designed to resist breakdown, move readily through water, and accumulate in people, soil, water, wildlife, and the food system. As a result, even comparatively small volumes can create lasting contamination and serious public-health concerns. PFAS exposure has been linked to serious health harms, including kidney, testicular, and liver cancers;

[1] https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2023_pur_highlights.pdf

liver toxicity; reduced fertility; pregnancy-related harms; developmental effects; immune-system suppression; elevated cholesterol; and kidney, cardiovascular, and metabolic impacts[2]. Their persistence and mobility make it critical to identify preventable sources of PFAS pollution before contamination becomes widespread, costly, and difficult to address.

An Environmental Working Group analysis of DPR data found that approximately 15 million pounds of PFAS pesticides were applied to California farmland between 2018 and 2023—an average of 2.5 million pounds each year[3]. PFAS pesticide residues were also found on 37% of tested non-organic California-grown produce. As California produces more than half of the nation's fruits, nuts, and vegetables, the consequences of PFAS pesticide use reach far beyond the state.

State monitoring reinforces the need for transparency. PFAS pesticides have been detected in surface water, sediment, and wastewater, yet existing monitoring captures only a limited number of PFAS pesticides[4]. Significant data gaps remain in major agricultural counties where PFAS pesticide use is particularly high.

Until recently, growers have been largely unaware that pesticides available to them may contain PFAS, which can contaminate their water, soil, crops, livestock, and impact their market access. Growers deserve to know the risks and benefits of these chemical tools. AB 1603 would help growers make informed choices.

Transparency is especially important for farmworkers and agricultural communities. Counties with high PFAS pesticide application rates—including Fresno and Kern[5]—have substantial Latino farmworker populations. Farmworkers and nearby residents already face disproportionate pesticide exposures. AB 1603 advances California's environmental-justice commitment by enabling the state and the public to identify and track another potential source of PFAS exposure.

California should be leading the nation in tackling PFAS pesticides—other states that have already acted to restrict some of these chemicals. Furthermore, California has recognized the need to address PFAS as a class by enacting protections against intentionally added PFAS in multiple consumer products. At a minimum, California must know which pesticides contain PFAS and how these are used.

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[2] https://sustainability.yale.edu/explainers/yale-experts-explain-pfas-forever-chemicals

[3] https://www.ewg.org/research/ewg-25-million-pounds-toxic-pfas-pesticides-spread-california-farmland-annually

[4] https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news-release/2026/05/ewg-pfas-pesticides-contaminate-half-california-surface-water

[5] https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/03a7e2a0ba6d41ada00031071827866f/page/Page#data_s=id%3A25d9a188d3d247a792eefc3a0e345055-19911f27eda-layer-7%3A15

For these reasons, Californians for Pesticide Reform respectfully urges you to sign AB 1603 (Schultz) into law.

Sincerely,

Ángel García
Co-Director

Mayra Sanchez
Associate Director