

19th December 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Sir/Madam,

Inquiry into Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

This Submission is made to urge very careful consideration by the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee in regard to any and all legislation and amendments relating to all current use and proposed future site specific, broad scale or aerial use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals/toxic chemicals from 19th December 2012 onwards.

The health and well being of human beings depends on the quality of fresh air, fresh potable water, quality and nutritious value of food and quality of life. The health, and even survival, of hundreds of species of life forms in the State of Tasmania depends on the health and interconnectedness of delicately balanced and fragile biosystems.

Everything is interconnected and interrelated. We can't poison or destroy any part of the web of life on this planet, or even the State of Tasmania, without impacting on life somewhere else.

Apart from obvious risks to natural environment, habitat, biodiversity, waterways, fauna, flora and fungi, numerous scientific research articles suggest that chemicals pose risks (some of which may only come to light after many years of chemical use) in regard to potential contamination of air, food producing soils, human and animal/amphibian endocrine disruption, microbe and human health and well being, surface waterways and ground water supplies and estuary and marine biodiversity and health.

By way of example, incidence of bacteria resistant to antibiotics and glyphosate resistant roadside weeds are unforeseen outcomes consequent to use of chemicals to 'control', weaken or eliminate specific life forms. It has been suggested that Fluorocarbons used in aerosol cans may have contributed to the thinning of the ozone and the creation of the hole in the ozone layer. The following is offered by way of example:

"Environmental and health concerns

Despite the presence of some natural fluorocarbons such as tetrafluoromethane, which has been reported in rocks,^[8] man-made fluorocarbons are potent [greenhouse gases](#).

Another important aspect in terms of environmental concerns, is certain fluorocarbons' [bioaccumulative](#) properties. Fluorocarbons are extremely stable and can be stored in the bodies of both humans and animals. Examples of harmful fluorocarbons

include [PFOA](#) (perfluorooctanoic acid) and [PFOS](#) (perfluorooctane sulfonate), frequently present in water resistant textiles and sprays conferring water resistant properties to textiles.^[9] Data from animal studies of PFOA indicate that it can cause several types of tumors and neonatal death and may have toxic effects on the immune, liver, and endocrine systems. Data on the human health effects of PFOA are however sparse.^[10]

The fluorocarbon, PFOA and PFOS have both been subject for numerous investigations by the EU and the [United States Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) regarding them being harmful to the environment.^[9]

(source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fluorocarbon>; 19/12/12)"

The list is potentially almost endless.

The existing and potential future impacts of Climate Change must also be taken into consideration during any current or future debate involving chemical use in veterinary applications or for agriculture (which may also impact adversely on the natural environment). Any additional pressures applied to, or imposed on, already vulnerable biosystems (and life forms which depend on those biosystems), may well tip the balance in regard to sustainability, health and well being of those biosystems and life forms. Their innate resilience and potential to adapt, and even survive, in coming decades may be placed at risk.

Chemical use for veterinary and agricultural purposes also poses risks in regard to air quality, and to sustainability and quality of fresh potable water supplies and food producing soils, in addition to risks of residual chemical/chemical contamination of foods for human consumption.

Members of the Senate Committee are therefore placed in positions of huge responsibility to ensure that all due diligence is carried out in regard to any and all amendments to the legislation under consideration and also in regard to approval for use and application of any chemicals/toxic chemicals which are currently or proposed for veterinary or agricultural use in the State of Tasmania. Chemicals can contaminate air and find their way into surface and ground water supplies, food producing soils, plants and animals which eat those plants. Water and air are essential for life, and plants and animals are consumed by humans. Little is known about the cumulative effects of these chemicals on human health. This is reason enough to tread very carefully.

The Senate Committee has obligations in relation to duty of care in regard to the health and well being of pregnant women, young children, the elderly and infirm and other members of the Tasmanian population who may be impacted directly or indirectly by chemical/toxic chemical use.

The Senate Committee also has duty of care obligations in regard to the current and future sustainability of quality food producing soils, quality of fresh potable water supplies and health and resilience of the Tasmanian natural environment, particularly in the light of impacts of Climate Change.

**Yours Sincerely,
Susan J. Probert**