

PAN Alert: Tell EPA to Protect Communities from Fumigants!

US EPA is reviewing dangerous fumigant pesticides for re-registration and considering what precautions applicators must take to protect the public from the health hazards of these volatile poisons. EPA is currently soliciting public comment on fumigant re-registrations and your input is needed.

Take Action now! Sign PAN's petition to EPA to demand the highest safety precautions for fumigant pesticides and help farmers change over to least-toxic soil pest management methods.

Fumigants are among the most toxic pesticides in use today, causing birth defects, cancer, Parkinson's disease and acute poisonings. They are used in large quantities to sterilize soils before planting -- an archaic tool of chemically-reliant industrial agriculture, the antithesis of soil-nurturing sustainable farming. It is time for them to go!

Fumigant drift into communities has resulted in mass poisonings in areas of high use, often causing the evacuation of hundreds of people from their homes and sending many to the hospital. Fumigants are also volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that contribute to smog and the resulting respiratory illness.

Sign PAN's petition today -- and please take two more minutes to use the "Tell-a-friend" feature to pass this Alert on to others who will take action to support safer, saner farming.

Some farmers need support to move away from chemical fumigants. In the meantime, we are asking EPA to require generous buffer zones near schools, hospitals, residences and other places where people may be exposed. We are also asking for notification before applications take place for people living and working close to fumigated areas. Please join us in asking US EPA to make these changes in fumigant use.

The fumigant pesticides being reviewed are metam sodium, chloropicrin, methyl bromide, dazomet and Telone. All pose a threat to the health of farmworkers and rural residents. We're using a petition to EPA because the Agency has made mass direct emails impossible (the same petition will be submitted on dockets for each of the fumigants). But petitions can make a difference. Please add your name now.

Letter:

Dear Stephen Johnson,

We are signing this petition to request that the Environmental Protection Agency:

- Initiate a permanent phase-out of soil fumigant pesticides and not register any new toxic chemical as a replacement. These chemicals are dangerous to human health and the environment. It is impossible to adequately manage the risks

associated with their use. Communities have been poisoned. Workers are routinely exposed and their health is frequently permanently damaged.

- Cancel the registration of methyl bromide, ending a serious human health hazard for thousands of farmworkers and nearby communities, and eliminating a major threat to the stratospheric ozone layer.
- Work collaboratively with USDA to ensure that farmers receive assistance and support while transitioning to least-toxic pest management methods that do not require use of toxic fumigants.
- In the interim period of fumigants phase-out, enact and implement regulations that protect workers and communities from all potentially harmful exposures—acute, sub-chronic and chronic. Fumigant mitigation measures must include: buffer zones around fumigated fields, community notification of fumigant applications, funding for air monitoring near fumigated sites to protect communities and on-site monitoring in fumigated fields to protect workers.

Comment [KGI] : Any worker protection measures?

Most fumigants are highly acutely toxic, have serious chronic toxicity and are applied at very high application rates. Injuries of farmworkers and bystanders as well as massive community poisonings by fumigants have been documented in California and Florida. Fumigants are extremely volatile and therefore substantial contributors to ozone-producing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that pollute the air. Methyl bromide erodes the stratospheric ozone layer that protects the earth from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Fumigants are difficult to apply without making mistakes, which can be devastating for individuals and communities. EPA is evaluating these chemicals for re-registration under the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 and must take this opportunity to enact landmark regulations to protect America's farmworkers, rural communities and the environment.

We urge US EPA to use its authority to phase out fumigants, establish protective mitigation measures during the phase-out period, and give incentives to farmers to transition away from fumigants as a pest control strategy.

Sincerely,

Your name inserted on the petition here.

| For more information see PAN's [Fumigant Campaign Page](#).