

April 3, 2025

Dear Legislator,

We are addressing you during the 2025 legislative session to urge you to oppose SF 394, A bill for an act relating to pesticides, by providing for tort liability. This bill prevents Iowa farmers, workers, and ordinary citizens from exercising their right to seek justice from the courts when their lives or the lives of their family members are upended or cut short by cancer.¹ It has been introduced in several other states where it has been met with bipartisan opposition.

While some proponents of this bill claim it "protects farmers" by securing their access to safe and affordable pesticides², in reality, this bill does nothing for farmers but denying them their rights to legal recourse. Bayer has already paid nearly \$11 billion to settle just a portion of the over 100,000 personal injury suits that have been filed against it. America is a nation drowning in pesticides, and Iowans are some of those most impacted. Iowa farmers spread more pesticides, commercial fertilizers, and manure than any other state. Over 53 million pounds of herbicides are applied annually to soybean and corn crops, with glyphosate-based herbicides (GBHs) accounting for nearly 16 million pounds. In Iowa, 90 percent of soybeans and 75 percent of corn crops are treated with glyphosate. This equates to an average of 8.9 million acres of soybean crops and 10.2 million acres of corn crops, blanketing over half of the state by land area.

While agribusiness interests and pesticide manufacturers seek to protect profit, Iowans are suffering. Iowa ranks number one for the fastest growing rate of new cancers and is second in cancer incidence overall. This deadly statistic strongly correlates with Iowa's flood of agricultural pollutants. In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic," indicating strong data on the chemical's cancer-causing properties. One in 20 Iowans will be diagnosed with

1

<https://beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/2024/02/state-legislation-popping-up-to-limit-liability-of-pesticide-manufacturers/>

2

<https://www.thegazette.com/letters-to-the-editor/bill-to-shield-company-from-cancer-lawsuits-will-likely-re-emerge-next-session/>

cancer in their lifetimes. This statistic will leave few Iowans untouched – these are our families, our neighbors and our friends.

While preserving the ability to sue is essential to ensuring Iowa's farmers receive the justice they deserve, it would be a mistake to believe voting against SF394 will be financially ruinous for Bayer or any other agribusiness interest. Many of the lawsuits filed, and particularly those that ended with the highest settlement amounts, involve older plaintiffs who regularly used RoundUp before the pesticide came equipped with extensive use restriction warnings on the label. Bayer plainly expects the portion of plaintiffs with such extensive claims to quickly diminish. This explains in part why only a fraction of the \$11 billion settlement was earmarked for future litigation.

At a time when our state ranks number one for the fastest growing rate of new cancers and is second in cancer incidence overall — we are calling on lawmakers to protect Iowans and oppose SF394

Signed,

100 Grannies
1000 Friends of Iowa
Center for Food Safety
Climate Land Leaders
Dallas County Soil and Water District
Dallas Soil and Water Conservation
Commission
De Melkerij Farms
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Food & Water Watch
Henry County Farmers and Neighbors
Indivisible 515
Iowa Alliance for Responsible
Agriculture
Iowa Citizens for Community
Improvement
Iowa Environmental Council
Iowa Faith & Climate Network
Iowa Farmers Union
Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO
Iowa Food System Coalition

Iowa Green Party
Jefferson County Farmers & Neighbors,
Inc.
League of Women Voters of Iowa
Lee County Labor Chapter
Northeast Organic Farming Association
Pesticide Action Network
Poweshiek CARES
Progress Iowa
SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa
Sunrise Movement Cedar Rapids
Women, Food, and Agriculture Network
Women's International League for
Peace & Freedom - Des Moines Branch
Worth County Citizens for Responsible
Agriculture