

Testimony of Dr. E.G. Vallianatos
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**The House Environment and Transportation Committee
HB 229- Pesticides –Use of Chlorpyrifos—Prohibition
Position: Support**

Dear Chairman Barve and members of the committee,

I worked in risk evaluation at the EPA for 25 years. I am the author of six books and hundreds of articles, many of which recount my experience at the EPA.

My employment at the EPA has given me insight into the unfortunate tug-of-war between policy based on science and policy based on politics. The failure of the EPA to ban chlorpyrifos is an example of politics winning over public health.

The neurotoxin chlorpyrifos is related to chemical warfare agents. It affects the brain in deleterious ways: causing dizziness, confusion, autism, lower IQ, difficulties in remembering and learning, and death. In the 1990s, EPA had reached partial cancellation agreements with the registrant of chlorpyrifos due to compelling information that these neurotoxic pesticides damage the developing nervous system of fetuses, infants and children. In 2006, chlorpyrifos was among 20 pesticides scheduled for renewal required by the 1996 law, the Food Quality Protection Act. At that time, EPA Union Presidents and scientists signed the following to the EPA administrator:

“Our colleagues in the Pesticide Program feel besieged by political pressure exerted by Agency of officials perceived to be too closely aligned with the pesticide industry and former EPA officials now representing the pesticide and agricultural community; and by the US Department of Agriculture through their Office of Pest Management Policy. Equally alarming is the belief among managers in the Pesticide and Toxics Programs that regulatory decisions should only be made after reaching full consensus with the regulated pesticide and chemicals industry.

Administrator Johnson, we ask that you adhere to your pledge to protect the public health of our nation’s infants and children, ensure that final tolerance reassessment decisions are unbiased by outside political influences, and that any decisions be based on a transparent and complete database in conformity with the law, sound science, and our principles of scientific integrity. Until EPA can state with scientific confidence that these pesticides will not harm the neurological development of our nation’s born and unborn children, there is no justification to continue to approve the use of the remaining [neurotoxic] OP [organophosphate] and carbamate pesticides.”

It is a tragedy that the EPA is still unable to protect the public from chlorpyrifos. Muzzling EPA scientists and ordering EPA to keep chlorpyrifos in the market is a straightforward crime of willfully poisoning children all over the country.

The rule of law, science and public health are not abstractions. They go to the core of civilization. The rule of law protects societies from anarchy. Science distinguish civilized people from barbarians. It’s our cherished legacy from Aristotle and the Greeks. Public health is of existential import. We must not allow the crippling of our future generation by chlorpyrifos. I wholeheartedly support the passage of Senate Bill 300 to ban chlorpyrifos in Maryland.

Biography of Evaggelos Villianatos, Ph.D.

Education

BA, Zoology, University of Illinois
MA, Greek Medieval history, University of Illinois
Ph.D., European / Greek history, University of Wisconsin
Postdoctoral studies in the history of science, Harvard University

Experience

Capitol Hill, 1976-78: International food and agriculture politics and development;
US Environmental Protection Agency, 1979-2004: environmental regulation, human and ecological risks of pesticides and industrialized agriculture, climate change; seconded to the UN Development Program, 1995-1996, worked on food sovereignty for Africa.

Teaching

History (teaching assistant): University of Wisconsin;
Environmental politics (visiting professor): American University, Humboldt State University, University of New Orleans, Bard College, George Washington University, University of Maryland and Pitcher College.

Books

- (1) Fear in the Countryside: The Control of Agricultural Resources in the Poor Countries by Non-Peasant Elites (Cambridge: Ballinger, 1976);
- (2) From Graikos to Hellene: Adamantios Koraes and the Greek Revolution (Athens: Academy of Athens Press, 1987);
- (3) Harvest of Devastation: The Industrialization of Agriculture and its Human and Environmental Consequences (New York: The Apex Press, 1994);
- (4) This Land is Their Land: How Corporate Farms Threaten the World (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2006);
- (5) The Passion of the Greeks: Christianity and the Rape of the Hellenes (Cape Code, MA: Clock and Rose Books, 2006).
- (6) Poison Spring: The Secret History of Pollution and the EPA (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014).

Unpublished book

Science and a Mind-boggling Computer from the Greeks

Articles

Hundreds of articles published in academic journals, newspapers, and electronic media (Truthout, AlterNet, On Line Opinion, Independent Science News, Huffington Post, Helios, Hellenic Insider, and Counterpunch).

Articles: (1) history of Greek science and technology; Greek history; and (2) the natural world, public health, and ecological civilization. Articles also examine the political corruption affecting the industry, academia and government on issues of environmental protection and public health.