



June 24, 2003

Mr. Stephen L. Johnson, Assistant Administrator
Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Mr. Johnson:

It was recently brought to our attention that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering eliminating the FY03 pass-through funding for the Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) through the Certification and Training Program. The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) is very concerned about the impact such a loss of PSEP funding would have on state pesticide programs.

As you know, the state departments of agriculture have long been the lead state agencies for implementing federal pesticide laws. We remain concerned that regulatory demands and requirements have continued to grow; yet federal environmental funding has declined or remained flat for almost a decade. NASDA's affiliate organization, the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO) has conducted funding surveys and previously conveyed to EPA the need for improved funding for state pesticide programs. In particular, our organizations have emphasized the need for increased funding for certification and training programs for pesticide applicators, as well as public education efforts. These programs are essential to the safe use of pesticides.

NASDA agrees with comments recently submitted to EPA from AAPCO and the American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators (AAPSE) that a reduction or elimination of PSEP funding will have a drastic negative impact on the ability of states to deliver quality pesticide applicator training and certification. We urge you to maintain this funding and stand ready to work with you to address these budget needs.

Sincerely yours,

Patrick A. Takasugi
NASDA President
Secretary, Idaho Department of Agriculture

