



Via Electronic Mail

August 26, 2020

Aurelia Skipwith,
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
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Cynthia Martinez
Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System
Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of the Interior
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Re: Public Petition to End the Use of Toxic Pesticides for Agricultural Purposes on National Wildlife Refuges

Director Skipwith and Chief Martinez:

On behalf of generations of Americans who use and value our National Wildlife Refuge System, the Center for Biological Diversity hereby delivers 27,038 petition signatures to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) requesting that the agency take immediate steps to end the use of toxic pesticides for agricultural purposes on national wildlife refuges. Taking this important step is necessary to ensure the continued biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of these public lands for generations to come

Our country's 568 wildlife refuges constitute the world's largest collection of lands set aside specifically for the preservation of fish and wildlife. The refuges, which include forests, wetlands, and waterways, are vital to the survival of thousands of imperiled species and are a critical component of the natural heritage of all Americans.

For the benefit of present and future generations, it is incumbent on the Service to conserve, enhance, and protect our national wildlife refuges and the animals that rely on them. But records show that the Service is making a mockery of this mission by allowing industrial-scale commercial farming of crops like corn, soybeans, and sorghum on refuge lands, triggering an escalating use of highly toxic pesticides. These practices conflict with the mission of the refuge

system — to preserve life — and threaten the long-term health of ecosystems and imperiled species.

It's time for the Service to stop prioritizing commercial agricultural interests over wildlife and birds in our national wildlife refuges. We urge you to discontinue the use of toxic pesticides for commercial agriculture immediately.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss how to resolve this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at hconnor@biologicaldiversity.org or (202) 681-1676.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Hannah Connor', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Hannah Connor
Senior Attorney
Environmental Health Program
Center for Biological Diversity

ENCLOSURES