



Consumer products giant will ‘vigorously challenge’ EPA rat poison ban

Debra Kahn / E&E reporter
Friday, February 1, 2013

Reckitt Benckiser Inc., one of the world’s largest manufacturers of consumer goods, said it plans to oppose U.S. EPA’s proposed ban on rat poisons containing extra-strong blood thinners.

EPA said earlier this week that it would withdraw or deny the registrations of 14 household pesticide products manufactured by the company.

The company said that the pesticides are needed to prevent rodent infestations and protect public health. The ban will take effect next month unless the company requests a hearing.

“We are deeply concerned that the EPA is trying to restrict access to essential safeguards that protect our families and our children from the serious public health dangers associated with rodent infestation,” said Hal Ambuter, director of regulatory and government affairs for Reckitt Benckiser. “We will vigorously challenge EPA’s actions to ensure that these effective and affordable rodent control products remain available to consumers to protect their homes and families for generations to come.”

Some of the products are packaged in a way that allows children or pets to access the bait, while some contain high concentrations of drugs that prevent blood clotting, known as second-generation anticoagulants, which EPA said are particularly dangerous because predators can also become sick after eating the rodents (Greenwire, Jan. 30).

EPA initially proposed banning the pesticides in 2008, under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). In 2011, there were still four companies that refused to reformulate their products (E&ENews PM, June 7, 2011). Reckitt Benckiser is the only one with products still on the market, along with one other company, which is voluntarily withdrawing its pesticides, an EPA spokesman said.

In addition to pesticides and cleaning products, the U.K.-based company also makes popular consumer brands including Clearasil face wash, Durex condoms and French’s mustard.

Environmentalists criticized Reckitt Benckiser for continuing to oppose the ban. “They have stalled the process up until today, and they continue to stall the process to protect children and wildlife,” said Jonathan Evans, toxics and endangered species campaign director for the Center for Biological Diversity.