



The Honorable Carl E. Heastie
 Speaker, New York State Assembly
 Legislative Office Building, Room 932
 Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
 Majority Leader, New York State Senate
 Legislative Office Building, Room 907
 Albany, NY 12247

LETTER IN SUPPORT OF A10074 / S9094 – BAN ON PARAQUAT

Dear Speaker Heastie and Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins,

We, the undersigned organizations, write in strong support of A10074 / S9094, legislation that would ban the distribution, sale, purchase, or use of paraquat in New York. This bill is a vital step toward protecting public health, safeguarding our agricultural communities, and aligning New York State with global best practices.

Paraquat is a highly toxic pesticide commonly used to control weeds and grasses in fields growing crops such as corn, soybeans, strawberries, pears, potatoes, artichokes, and garlic, and on orchard fruits including grapes and apples. The human cost of paraquat is severe. Peer-reviewed research shows that exposure to paraquat, particularly when sprayed within 500 meters of homes or workplaces, **more than doubles a person’s risk of developing Parkinson’s disease**¹—a progressive, incurable neurological disorder that is on the rise. Even small, chronic exposures—through air drift or contaminated dust—can accumulate and pose

¹ See Tanner CM et al., *NIH study finds two pesticides associated with Parkinson’s disease*, National Institute of Health, (Friday, February 11, 2011) <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-study-finds-two-pesticides-associated-parkinsons-disease> (last visited May 9, 2025).

significant health risks. Recent science also shows that paraquat is potentially 4,000 times more likely to go into air after application to plants than previously understood, and potentially spread miles away from where it was applied.²

The connection between paraquat exposure and Parkinson's disease is no longer speculative. Numerous scientific studies, including those supported by the National Institutes of Health, have established a clear and alarming link. Additionally, paraquat has been associated with **thyroid disease, kidney damage, childhood leukemia, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma**³—all of which place a significant burden on individuals, families, and our health care system. One paraquat maker, Syngenta, a Chinese state enterprise, has long understood paraquat's health risks but spent decades downplaying these risks with the public and the U.S. EPA.⁴

Despite its toxicity, paraquat continues to be used in agriculture, using methods that heighten the risk of exposure, such as aerial spraying and ground application without buffer zones. Safer, effective weed management alternatives have long been available, and many farmers have already transitioned away from paraquat voluntarily. Banning its use in New York would accelerate this shift and prioritize the health of rural residents, agricultural workers, and neighboring communities.

Notably, **over 70 countries have banned paraquat**,⁵ including China, Brazil, and the European Union. It is long past time for New York to take similar action and ensure rural and agricultural communities are not exposed to a toxic chemical that so many other nations have deemed too dangerous to allow—including Switzerland, home to Syngenta and China, home to SinoChem formerly ChemChina, the parent company of Syngenta. Syngenta recently announced its intention to phase out production in the UK. Other companies still manufacture paraquat in China, where its use and sale are banned.

A10074 / S9094 reflects a science-based, commonsense approach to public health and environmental stewardship. We urge you to support this critical legislation and help protect New Yorkers from needless and preventable harm.

Sincerely,

Environmental Working Group

The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research

American Parkinson Disease Association

Parkinson's Foundation

PD Avengers

² <https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/epa-updates-review-potential-paraquat-volatilization-and-plans-request-additional-data>

³ See INSERM Collective Expertise Center, *Effects of pesticides on health: New data*, Montrouge (FR): EDP Sciences (2022) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK581468/> (last visited May 9, 2025).

⁴ <https://www.thenewlede.org/2023/06/syngentas-swat-team-internal-files-reveal-secret-strategies-to-influence-science/>

⁵ Public Interest Research Group, *This toxic pesticide is banned in 70 countries, but still legal in America*, (Dec. 19, 2024) <https://pirg.org/articles/this-toxic-pesticide-is-banned-in-70-countries-but-still-legal-in-america/> (last visited May 9, 2025).

Power Over Parkinson's

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

American Bird Conservancy

Center for Environmental Health

Citizens Campaign for the Environment

Clean+Healthy

Earthjustice

Food & Water Watch

Interfaith Public Health Network

Mamavation

Natural Resources Defense Council

Non-Toxic Neighborhoods

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York

Re:wild Your Campus

Rural Coalition

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter