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Pesticides and Public Health in New York: Environmental Protection Agency Compliance with the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA)

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In 1996 Congress passed pesticide legislation, the Food Quality Protection Act, which amended the two major statutes that regulate pesticides, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA). These amendments set tougher safety standards for assessing new pesticides already registered, as well as for old pesticides previously registered, significantly changing the way pesticides are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

As a matter of protecting the public's health in New York, the New York State Office of the Attorney General Environmental Protection Bureau reviews whether the EPA is in compliance with FQPA, both legally and scientifically. As an intern I evaluated the pesticides sulfur fluoride, chlorothalonil, metribuzin and alachlor scientifically, with regard to some of the mandates required by FQPA, including: aggregate exposure assessments from all dietary exposures, drinking water, and non-occupational exposures, consideration for a common mode of toxicity of related pesticides and the appropriate safety factor, and the required ten-fold safety factor for extra protection of infants and children from pesticide exposure. As a result of my evaluation under Dr. Judith Schreiber, and in consult with one of the Assistant Attorneys General, Karen Kaufmann, the Attorney General's Office submitted comments in August, 2006 to the EPA regarding the tolerances, or residue limits, it established for sulfur fluoride.