

*2026
ANNUAL SPRING MEETING
STANDING COMMITTEE, WORKGROUP, AND
LIAISON REPORTS*

OISC Support to AAPCO Check Sample Program

Report to AAPCO Lab Committee and Board

Ping Wan

2/25/2026

History and OISC Role

The Office of Indiana State Chemist (OISC) has served as the host laboratory for the AAPCO Check Sample Program since 2001. Ping Wan has served as Chair of the Check Sample Committee since 2006.

Participation in the program has grown substantially over time, from approximately 40 laboratories (primarily domestic U.S. labs) in 2006 to around 70 laboratories currently, with roughly half domestic and half international participants.

Program Scope

The Check Sample Program provides commercial pesticide formulation samples containing four to five pesticide active ingredients. Each year, a variety of analytes, matrices, and fortification levels are offered to allow participating laboratories to gain experience with different formulation types encountered in the marketplace.

The hosting laboratory performs homogeneity testing to ensure the quality and consistency of distributed samples.

Value to the Lab Community

The AAPCO Check Sample Program is the only proficiency testing program worldwide that features commercially formulated pesticide products. Participants include U.S. federal and state regulatory laboratories, U.S. commercial pesticide manufacturers, international regulatory agencies, and international pesticide manufacturers.

Over the past two decades, OISC has supported numerous laboratories, particularly in developing countries, by providing guidance on analytical methodologies and troubleshooting technical challenges.

Recent Program Activity (2025)

The most recent AAPCO Check Sample Program testing round was conducted from January through May 2025 by the Pesticide Laboratories, Office of Indiana State Chemist (OISC). Approximately 60 laboratories participated, including 36 domestic laboratories and 23 international laboratories representing countries across four continents.

Annual subscription fees in 2025 were set at:

- **\$200 per year for U.S. laboratories**
- **\$250 per year for international laboratories**

This fee structure has been in place since 2008 by AAPCO Board decision. The AAPCO Treasurer collected participant fees, and the total proceeds (approximately \$20,000) were donated to the AAPCO general fund.

2026 Program Cancellation and Committee Discussions

The 2026 Check Sample Program was cancelled due to resource constraints within the hosting laboratory.

Throughout the year of 2025, multiple committee discussions were held to identify a backup host laboratory. The proposed model was a shared-host structure, in which:

- OISC would host the program in odd-numbered years (starting in 2027), and
- A backup host laboratory would conduct the program in even-numbered years (starting in 2028).

OISC would provide training and transition support to the backup host.

Several laboratories initially expressed interest; however, after evaluating the financial and labor commitments, all withdrew.

OISC Hosting Commitment and Cost Breakdown

The estimated cost to conduct one round of the program is approximately \$14,000, which is absorbed entirely by OISC. Subscription revenue is estimated at \$20,000, with 100% of proceeds donated to AAPCO.

1. Shipping Costs

- Domestic packages: **\$700**
- International packages: **\$2,000**

2. Materials

- Formulation products (3–4 products): **\$400**
- Vials: **\$400**
- Shipping materials (labels, boxes, absorbent pouches): **\$200**

3. Homogeneity Testing

- Gases: **\$200**
- Reagents: **\$200**
- Lab consumables (filters and vials): **\$200**

4. Labor Sample Preparation and Shipping (*Estimated labor rate: \$50/hour*)

- Subsampling into tubes and vials: **30 hours**
- Homogeneity testing: **40 hours**
- Packaging and shipping documentation (70 packages): **40 hours**
- **Total: 110 hours**

5. Report Processing

- Statistical analysis: **10 hours**
- Data compilation and review: **50 hours**
- Report writing: **10 hours**
- Participant communication: **20 hours**
- **Total: 90 hours**

Future Activities and Timeline

- 1. 2027 Check Sample Program**
 - Samples will be shipped in January 2027.
 - Test results will be due at the end of March 2027.
 - Evaluation report will be distributed in April 2027.
- 2. AAPCO Annual Conference**
 - Ping Wan will provide a program update at the Lab Committee meeting in March 2027.
- 3. Alternate Host Recruitment for 2028**
 - Program announcements will be issued in June 2027 to determine whether the 2028 testing round will proceed.
 - If no volunteer host is identified by June 2027, the 2028 round will be skipped.

4. The 2029 Program

- OISC will host the next testing round in January 2029.

AAPCO Standing Committee Report to Annual Meeting

Standing Committee or Work Group: **Laboratory Committee**

Chair Person's Name: Ashley Pierce

Date of Report: **03/04/26**

Issues to be raised for discussion by AAPCO Board or General Session:

The Laboratory Committee wants to share a quick reminder about the annual lab funding allotments and how these resources are intended to support your teams. Each lab receives designated funding to ensure laboratorians have what they need to maintain high-quality operations, pursue professional development, and participate in training opportunities that strengthen our overall capacity. These funds are specifically allocated to support activities such as continuing education, skill-building workshops, and other training that directly benefits laboratory practice.

As we move forward, please also keep in mind the recent updates to our funding structure. These changes were made to make it easier for laboratorians to attend relevant trainings. Our goal is to ensure that staff can take advantage of development opportunities in a timely and equitable way.

Thank you for helping ensure these resources are used as intended and for continuing to support the growth and readiness of your laboratory teams.

General summary of work group/liaison activities for the year:

EPA/AAPCO Lab Committee Conference Calls

The EPA and AAPCO Laboratory Committee continues to meet quarterly through EPA-hosted conference calls, creating more frequent opportunities to address emerging issues than the annual meeting alone allows. These calls also broaden participation by enabling analyst-level staff and laboratorians who cannot travel—often due to financial constraints—to engage in national discussions and communicate directly with colleagues across the country.

SFIREG updates were a regular component of the quarterly calls, offering insight into regulatory developments, state concerns, and national program priorities. One significant area of discussion centered on how laboratories should prepare for and implement the new methylene chloride regulation, including anticipated impacts on sample handling, method adjustments, safety considerations, and communication with regulatory partners. The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) representatives provided updates on opportunities for available paid internship and fellowship programs, along with information about travel award funding to support training participation.

The Committee also welcomed the addition of new standing committee members this year, as well as strengthening representation across states and enhancing continuity during a period marked by substantial turnover in laboratory staffing.

AAPCO Laboratory Committee Annual Meeting Break-out Sessions 2025 Meeting

The Laboratory Committee meets annually during the AAPCO spring meeting. The following report outlines activities from last year's meeting.

The Laboratory Committee met on Monday, March 3 and Tuesday, March 4, 2025, during the AAPCO annual meeting. Virtual attendance option was also provided. There were approximately 20 in person participants from state laboratories, the EPA, and industry partners with additional members being able to participate virtually.

The in-person meeting opened with a welcome, roll call, and an overview of the past year, including the AAPCO Annual Report and SFIREG liaison updates. Participants received program reports from Wisconsin and Indiana on their respective check sample programs before moving into a series of state laboratory updates covering 2024 sample workloads, testing scope, special projects, operational challenges, successes, and program changes. The afternoon continued with open discussion among states.

The following day's breakout session featured a presentation from BASF on the pesticide registration process for manufacturers, followed by a roundtable on emerging issues such as pesticide formulations, legislative developments, challenging analytes, ISO accreditation, method validation considerations, new methylene chloride guidance, and staffing concerns. Additional technical sessions included a comparison of high-resolution LCMS and QqQ instrumentation, an overview of Quality Assurance Project Plans from EPA Region 8, and a discussion on national workshop funding. The meeting concluded with the AAPCO Business Meeting.

The AAPCO Laboratory Committee meeting at the 2026 in person AAPCO yearly meeting.

The Laboratory Committee is meeting in person during the 2026 AAPCO meeting in the afternoons of Monday, March 2 and all day Tuesday, March 3. Agenda topics include updates and program reports from partners and states, laboratory allocation training fund update. Presentations will also cover new extraction techniques, fellowship experiences, OPP reorganization, the EPA's analytical Chemistry branch and a presentation on a pesticide emergency response. The committee continues to work on encouraging engagement and participation by its members.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Pierce

Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services

State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG) Report for AAPCO Annual Meeting March 2-4, 2026

Chairperson Steven Dwinell, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

The State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG) is a permanent committee of the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO) and provides a mechanism for states/territories to communicate directly with EPA. It enables states/territories to play a meaningful role in the development of pesticide policies and regulations. The Full SFIREG Committee is composed of one state/territorial pesticide regulatory official from each of the ten EPA regions. There are three Working Committees as part of the SFIREG process – Pesticides Operation and Management (POM); Environmental Quality Issues (EQI); and ESA Strategy Implementation (ESI).

The number of issues and policy questions being addressed by the Full Committee and the Working Committees is extensive, and the efforts and work performed by Regional Representatives and the Chairs and Members of the Working Committees is to be commended. Their work is making a difference.

Full SFIREG meetings were held in June and December 2025. The June meeting was a virtual meeting that consisted of three 4-hour calls over June 2, 3, and 4. The December meeting was held December 8 and 9 in Alexandria, Virginia. Agendas and presentations from the meetings are available at: <https://aapco.org/2015/07/30/sfireg-3/> and <https://aapco.org/sfireg-meeting-minutes/>

All issues of concern raised during the June and December meetings were referred to the appropriate working committee for consideration. No new issue papers were developed.

Starting with the December 2024 Full SFIREG Committee meeting, reports from SLA Regional representatives are provided at the beginning of the meeting to allow EPA and regulatory partner representatives to respond to issues raised during the pre-SFIREG meetings held in the Regions.

Joint Working Committee meetings were held April 7 and 8, 2025 in Raleigh, North Carolina, hosted by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, and September 15 and 16 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, hosted by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Agendas and presentations from the meetings are available at:

<https://aapco.org/sfireg-working-committee-meeting-minutes/>

Please refer to the reports of the Working Committee Chairs for details of the efforts of these committees.

AAPCO and SFIREG appreciate the support of SLAs that host the Joint Working Committee meetings. Holding these meetings at SLA locations allows AAPCO/SFIREG to use available funds more efficiently. Meeting at different locations also provides the host SLA to engage their staff and to learn more about the SFIREG process as well as showcase state capabilities and interests.

During 2025, SFIREG Regional Representatives and Working Committee members were polled regarding the timing of meetings. The members polled favored starting meetings on Tuesdays, rather than Mondays, in order to avoid weekend travel. Consequently, starting with the April 2026 Joint Working Committee meeting, SFIREG meetings will be scheduled to start on Tuesdays, allowing Monday of the meeting week to be the travel day.

The schedule for meetings for CY 2026 is:

SFIREG JWC: April 7-8, 2026, Austin, TX; hosted by the Texas Department of Agriculture

Full SFIREG: June 2-4, 2026 Virtual

SFIREG JWC: September 15-16, 2026, location not determined

Full SFIREG: December 8-9, 2026, Washington DC area

2026 AAPCO Annual Meeting – Worker Protection Committee Report

Work Group/Committee: Worker Protection Committee

Chairs: Kelly Friend, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and Pat Farquhar, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Members:

Member	Agency	Email Address
Amy Sullivan	AAPCO	aapco.sfireg@gmail.com
Tony Cofer	Alabama Dept of Agriculture Industries	tony.cofer@agi.alabama.gov
Jack Peterson	Arizona Dept. of Agriculture	jpeterson@azda.gov
Donna Marciano	California Department of Pesticide Regulation Enforcement Branch	Donna.Marciano@cdpr.ca.gov
Kelly Friend	Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services	kelly.friend@fdacs.gov
Neil Richmond	Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services	neil.richmond@fdacs.gov
Ricardo Davalos	Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services	Ricardo.Davalos@FDACS.gov
Nick Sumner	Georgia Dept. of Agriculture	nicholas.sumner@agr.georgia.gov
Antonio Castro-Escobar	Michigan Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development	escobara@michigan.gov
Jasper Cobb	Mississippi Dept. of Ag and Commerce	Jasper@mdac.ms.gov
Laura Vollar	Mississippi Dept. of Ag and Commerce	LauraV@mdac.ms.gov
Kristin Lashley	Alabama Department of Agriculture	kristen.lashley@agi.alabama.gov
Robin Tutor-Marcom	North Carolina Agromedicine Institute	tutorr@ecu.edu
Patrick Farquhar	North Carolina Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services	Pat.Farquhar@ncagr.gov
Patrick Jones	North Carolina Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services	patrick.jones@ncagr.gov
Carmina Hanson	North Carolina Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services	Carmina.Hanson@ncagr.gov
Leo Reed	Office of the Indiana State Chemist	reedla@purdue.edu
Kaci Buhl	Oregon State University – NPIC	buhlk@ace.orst.edu
Ted Bunch	Oregon OSHA	theodore.bunch@dcbs.oregon.gov
Kathy Booker	Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture	kathy.booker@tn.gov
Richard Strickland	Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture	richard.strickland@tn.gov
Perry Cervantes	Texas Dept. of Agriculture	Perry.Cervantes@texasagriculture.gov
Kelly Miranda*	Georgia Dept. of Agriculture	kelly.miranda@agr.georgia.gov
Adam Brockman*	Office of the Indiana State Chemist	atbrockm@purdue.edu
Ryne Yarger	US Environmental Protection Agency	Yarger.Ryne@epa.gov
Royan Teter	US Environmental Protection Agency	Teter.Royan@epa.gov
Michael Bauman	US Environmental Protection Agency	bauman.michael@epa.gov
Emma Cross*	US Environmental Protection Agency	Cross.Emma@epa.gov
Isabel Gross*	US Environmental Protection Agency	Gross.Isabel@epa.gov
Candice Lavelle*	US Environmental Protection Agency	Lavelle.candice@epa.gov
*New Attendees/ Members		

Issues to be raised for discussion by AAPCO Board or General Session:

None noted.

General summary of committee activities for the year:

Committee Meeting

The Worker Protection Committee met virtually on February 5, 2026. There were 20 participants. The following updates were provided:

- Emma Cross, Office of Compliance, OECA provided an update on the WPS Inspection Manual.

Emma will be leading the review of the Inspection Manual. She indicated it was last updated in 2018. Most of the changes are related to the 2024 AEZ rule and updates to the immediate family provisions. The updates also included tips for document collection, ways to address communication barriers, retaliation, and warning sign language. The EPA is getting feedback from many sources. They had some conversations with the Tribal Pesticide Program Council (TPPC) (and it will go through Tribal Consultation), and they received feedback from AAPCO's WPS Committee. The manual will also be discussed at PIRT and they hope to get comments on the inspection checklist.

Kaci Buhl mentioned that she noticed differences in checklists across the nation (ie. some are one page; some are 3 pages). Several states shared WPS inspection forms with PERC in 2019 and PERC made a resource library for inspectors at that time. There might be useful examples, just sharing.

<https://www.pesticideresources.org/wps/for-inspectors/>

Pat Farquhar suggested that they may want to have PIRT attendees to bring their state checklists with them to compare. They also may consider putting regulatory citations on the form if it is not already included.

It was discussed that the order and flow of the checklist is important. The WPS Committee will also be given an opportunity to review the checklist.

It was mentioned that the Field Inspection Pocket Guide was a good tool in the past. The guide can be found at: <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPURL.cgi?Dockey=500002L1.TXT>

- Ryne Yarger, Pesticide Re-evaluation Division, OPP, shared plans for updating WPS Materials and a status of the Label Review Manual (specifically - chapter 10). Ryne indicated it has been over a year since the new provisions of AEZ came into effect. The WPS training materials needed updating around the AEZ and some context was added around the immediate family exemption, as it relates to suspension of applications.

Ryne indicated that 27 of 42 training courses needed to be updated because of the AEZ provisions. Some of the trainings materials were videos and he indicated these could take a little time to update verses updating a PowerPoint presentation. EPA has approved 4 of the 27, so far. They have about 5 other trainings in house to approve, as well as several new trainings. Ryne indicated EPA will still accept the existing trainings courses, but trainers need to be discussing the new material, even if the presentations slides are not updated yet.

EPA has created an infographic/one pager for key components of the AEZ. This can be used as an addendum for training. The new resources can be found on the following site:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/worker-protection-standard-application-exclusion-zone>

As the trainings are updated and approved, they are getting new approval numbers. EPA is adding 4 digits to the training number to indicate the revision month and year.

Ricardo Davalos asked if the documents produced by EPA were ADA compliant. Isabel Gross indicated they are 508 compliant.

Ryne also discussed updates to the Label Review Manual. He indicated they are working on chapter 10, to include cleaning up regulatory citations and respiratory information. The last time it was revised was 2016, so much has changed. As a group, they are trying to get done by end of calendar year 2026. He indicated there may be another public comment period, so we will have an opportunity to weigh in.

- Isabel Gross, OPP – Isabel provided an update on cooperative agreement projects related to worker safety. There are two that were awarded in 2025, under PRIA 5: the Health Care Provider Training and Technical Assistance for Pesticide Illness, and Farmworker Training and Education Program for Pesticide Safety. Both are 5-year agreements and are in the start up phase. The two other cooperative grant funded projects are with PSEPs and NPIC.

More can be found on EPA's website: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/pesticide-cooperative-agreements>

- Kaci Buhl, Deputy Director, Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative (PERC) – PERC Materials Update

Kaci mentioned that as PERC operations are wrapping up, she wanted to provide an update on the status of publications and revisions that were already underway by PERC. Unfortunately, documents had to be prioritized and not everything could make the priority list. Kaci provided the attached summary: "Status of PERC Resources re: AEZ Revisions."

- Amy Sullivan, Pesticide Inspection Residential Training (PIRT) – Provided an update on the upcoming WPS PIRT.

Amy shared a preview of the draft agenda for the Worker Protection Standard Pesticide Inspection and Investigation Training PIRT, to be held in Phoenix, Arizona March 17 – 20, 2026. Amy indicated that they had a great planning group and that the target audience would be inspectors with previous experience conducting WPS inspection as opposed to brand new inspectors. The primary focus of the training is to improve interviewing skills. Participants will get an opportunity to work with farm workers, learn how to use visual aids, do mock inspections and practice interviewing. They will also discuss de-escalation as part of the training.

Other Activities

- The EPA, Office of Compliance, OECA, provided the Worker Protection Committee with the opportunity to review the WPS Inspection Manual for feedback. We provided feedback from Committee members on August 18, 2025. EPA has indicated they hope to have this ready by the WPS PIRT scheduled for March. The WPS committee also had the opportunity to review and comment on MSU's Respirator Protection Toolkit and Bilingual Labeling as mandated by PRIA.



Status of PERC Resources re: AEZ Revisions

February 5, 2026 – Shared with the AAPCO WPS Committee

- ⇒ PERC operations will end in phases through August 2026, with a transition for some functions to UC Davis Continuing & Professional Education (UCD CPE).
- ⇒ UCD CPE is committed to maintaining the PERC Store and the availability of print-runs (hard copies) and modifiable files for applicator certification manuals.
- ⇒ The continued availability of the PERC website and Vimeo channel depends on several factors, such as income from the PERC Store.

- [Online WPS TTT Course](#) (English & Spanish)

What resources are in the formatting phase, with changes approved by EPA?

Note: These items may or may not be translated. Website pages are auto-translated.

- [Application Exclusion Zone \(AEZ\) Long guide](#) (Webpage)(English & Spanish)
- [Guides for the Worker Protection Standard](#) (Webpage)
- [Quick Reference Guide to the Worker Protection Standard \(8.5 x 11\)](#) (English & Spanish)
- [Worker Protection Standard: Handbook for Agricultural Employers](#) (English & Spanish) – It may not be translated.
- [How to Comply with the Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides](#) (English & Spanish) – It will likely be translated.

What is currently being reviewed by EPA (all website pages)

- [Definitions Page](#) and [Definition - Application Exclusion Zone \(AEZ\)](#) (Webpages)
- [Application Exclusion Zone \(AEZ\) Fact Sheet](#) (Webpage)
- [WPS Compliance Schedule](#) (Webpage)
- [Just for You: Crop Advisors](#) (Webpage)
- [How do I comply with WPS when working with an aerial applicator?](#) (Webpage)
- [How do I comply with WPS when working with a commercial pesticide handler employer?](#) (Webpage)
- [What are my responsibilities as an agricultural employer?](#) (Webpage)
- [What are my responsibilities as a CPHE?](#) (Webpage)
- [What are my employer's responsibilities under the WPS?](#) (Webpage)

What is currently under review by PERC (changes being drafted)?

Note: Translation of these items is uncertain.

- Video: [WPS Pesticide Handler Safety Training](#) (English & Spanish)
- pptx: [WPS Pesticide Handler Safety Training Presentation](#) (English & Spanish)

Changes would be helpful, but did not make the priority list:

- [National Worker Protection Standard: A Manual for Trainers](#) (English & Spanish)
 - **Insert for printed copies:** [AEZ Reconsideration Comparison Table](#)
- [In-Person Delivery of a WPS Train-the-Trainer Course](#) (pptx) (English & Spanish)
 - Not widely utilized

What resources have been evaluated as “good-to-go” without any changes related to the AEZ?

- [PERC Bilingual Dictionary](#)
- [WPS Pesticide Safety for Agricultural Workers \(video\)](#) (English & Spanish)
- [WPS Worker Training Flipchart](#) (English/Spanish/Haitian-Creole, etc.)
- [WPS Pesticide Worker Safety Training \(ppt\)](#)
- [Training Resources for the Worker Protection Standard](#)
- [WPS Training Video Clips by PERC](#)
- [Train-the-Trainer to Deliver Worker/Handler Training Required by the Worker Protection Standard \(WPS\)](#)

PERC is hosting several WPS training **materials that were created by others**. None of these were reviewed or updated after federal changes to the AEZ were finalized in 2024. PERC will continue hosting until or unless the creators provide replacements. We have received updated versions from Iowa State University for their PERC-hosted items.

- Pesticides in Forestry, A Worker's Guide to Safe Practices (videos in English and Spanish, with and without closed captioning)
WPS Guidance for Marijuana Growers, Washington State



PESTICIDE INSPECTOR RESIDENTIAL TRAINING PROGRAM

AAPCO 2026 Report

PIRT Team

Amy Sullivan
PIRT Administrator

Cary Giguere
PIRT Administrator

Tricia Wancko
Project Manager

Kelly Engle
EPA PIRT Coordinator

The purpose of the Pesticide Inspector Residential Training program (PIRT) is to provide pesticide educational training to enforcement staff of pesticide state lead agencies, territories, and tribes working under FIFRA cooperative agreements, to develop or enhance their ability to formulate and implement pesticide regulatory programs, and/or undertake new initiatives.

The scope is national and seeks to support pesticide enforcement staff by delivering a foundational understanding of FIFRA and basic inspector concepts and activities, how to conduct different types of inspections, strategies to address ongoing challenges, including tackling complex and highly nuanced issues surrounding implementation of new federal registrations, rulemaking, and priorities. PIRT uses demonstrated educational approaches to conducting investigations in its classroom instruction, field trips, and mock inspections. PIRT will seek to promote uniformity in enforcement understanding while taking into account differing needs based on geography and varying state or tribal regulations.

The primary goal is to provide a respectful, knowledgeable, and relevant program that offers sound, practical approaches to enforcement that are usable by the enforcement community. We also seek to foster community, encourage relationship building, allow for mentoring opportunities, and support resource sharing.

OBJECTIVES

1. Providing high quality, relevant training for pesticide State Lead Agency, Tribal Pesticide Enforcement Program, and Territorial Lead Agency inspectors that are valued by pesticide enforcement programs. Three to four trainings will be offered per year in-person. In consultation with EPA's PIRT Coordinator and the Steering Committee, we will explore offering short virtual mini-PIRTs as well to engage a broader audience with PIRT.
2. Ensuring that trainings focused on fundamentals are available throughout the grant cycle as well as a wide variety of topic-specific and advanced trainings to engage varying levels of experience among enforcement staff.
3. Strengthening and expanding networks for inspectors and building collaborative relationships that support ongoing learning and resource utilization.
4. Provide a classroom style forum to learn about emerging issues to develop and share effective strategies for fostering compliance among the regulated community
5. Elevate the voice of enforcement staff by providing opportunities to discuss the issues they face currently, and to solicit strategies related to proposed measures that will impact enforcement into the future. Provide support for ongoing dialogue to share perspectives, concerns, and actively provide these suggestions for improvement with the larger FIFRA community via partners such as AAPCO, SFIREG, ASPCRO, and TPPC and increase awareness and use of the PIRT website.
6. Provide ongoing resource accessibility for enforcement programs through stewardship of course materials and related useful information on the PIRT website.
7. Evaluate and solicit membership of the PIRT Steering committee to ensure the success of the program.
8. Examine course success to continue improvement in engagement and educational approaches used in PIRT.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Composition

The PIRT Steering Committee is comprised of fourteen people in total: eight state members, one tribal member, four EPA members, and the PIRT Coordinator who is a standing member of the Steering Committee. Five of the state members are from different EPA regions, while one member serves as a previous PIRT host representative. There is also one representative of the

American Association of Pesticide Control Officials, the Association of Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials, and the Tribal Pesticide Program Council. The three EPA representatives are from the Office of Compliance, the Office of Civil Enforcement, and an EPA regional office. The PREP liaison from the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention also sits on the steering committee.

The AAPCO President or designee will serve as the PIRT Steering committee co-chair with the PIRT administrators.

2025-2026 PIRT Steering Committee Members

State Lead Agencies

Tony Cofer, Alabama Department of Agriculture

Michael Ekedahl, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection

Michael Rigirozzi, Colorado Department of Agriculture, Division of Plant Industry

Matt Wood, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Garret Creason, Office of Indiana State Chemist

Patrick Jones, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Africa Dorame-Avalos, Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.

Association of Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials

Allison Cuellar, Texas Department of Agriculture

Association of American Pesticide Control Officials

Bob Blankenburg, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Sharon Dobesh, EPA Region 7

Ricardo Jones, EPA OECA, Office of Compliance

Royan Teter, EPA OECA, Office of Civil Enforcement

Cindy Wire, EPA PREP Liaison

Timing

The PIRT Steering Committee is convened on an annual basis during the in July, or as needed, to make decisions concerning course selections and the target audience for each course. The work of the Steering Committee is typically complete by October 1st of the year and before any planning groups are convened.

Roles

1. Review national course survey results and select courses for the coming season.
2. Determine the specific type, format, and number of training courses.
3. The Steering Committee has responsibility for determining the following information for each course:
 - a. target audience,
 - b. course goals,
 - c. major topic areas,
 - d. field trips, mock inspections, or similar hands-on activities,
 - d. determine if a pre-course webinar or homework is necessary,
 - e. date and location of course,
 - f. planning group members.

PLANNING GROUP

Composition

Planning groups consist of 7-8 state/tribal and EPA employees. We aim for at least 2 members who attended the last course of the same title. The 7-8 members are typically comprised of these groups:

- 5 SLAs -Including one from the location of the course
- 1 Tribal rep
- 1 EPA HQ
- 1 EPA Region

- 1 Steering Committee member

Timing

Planning groups generally meet once a week for several weeks until the planning is complete. Planning group meetings typically begin 5 months prior to the course.

Roles

The planning group's overall objective is to provide structure and support to ensure that the training is as successful as possible.

1. Develop agenda and details of each course
2. Create course agendas or training approaches
3. Develop an appropriate curriculum for each course in accordance with the guidance from the PIRT Steering Committee
4. Conduct the following work:
 - a. Refine the target audience,
 - b. Refine the course goal,
 - c. Refine major topic areas,
 - d. Identify appropriate speakers,
 - e. Provide guidance on how long to spend on each topic,
 - f. Identify the type of activity,
 - g. Provide input on the proposed list of nominees accepted into the course.

2026 Course Offerings

Worker Protection Pesticide Inspection and Investigation Training

March 17-20, 2026 | Phoenix, AZ

- Provide pesticide inspectors with a basic knowledge and awareness of the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) and considerations when performing inspections and investigations.
- Enhance participants' ability to meet the present challenges of enforcing and recording compliance with the WPS for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 inspections.
- Provide networking opportunities for those in the pesticide community.

ESA Compliance Workshop

Washington, DC / May 18-20, 2026

- During this workshop we will draft Inspector Guidance for use when conducting inspections/investigations with labels that have ESA protective language. The draft Guidance will later be refined through SFIREG's Endangered Species Strategy Implementation Working Committee.

Ag Use Concerns PIRT

Willamette Valley, OR / July 14-17, 2026

Inspector Basics PIRT

Twin Cities, MN / October 6-9, 2026

PREP Steering Committee Report

PREP Administrator: Lisa Blecker, Colorado State University

PREP Coordinator: Cindy Wire, US EPA Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention

Date of Report: February 27, 2026

2026 PREP Steering Committee

We convened three meetings with the PREP Steering Committee from September 11, 2025, through September 30, 2025, to plan the 2026 PREP season. Our planning season was brief since the Cooperative Agreement funding PREP expired on September 30, 2025, and a new Cooperative Agreement was not in place.

The 2026 PREP Steering Committee is comprised of the following voting members:

- Gretchen Paluch, AAPCO President, AAPCO Immediate Past President, Steering Committee Chair
- Kelly Friend, AAPCO President
- Brian Verhougstraete, AAPCO President Elect
- Patrick Farquhar, AAPCO Director
- Sarah Caffery, AAPCO Director
- Kevin Martin, EPA Region 8
- Liz Vizard, EPA OPP/Office of Pesticide Programs
- Ricardo Jones, EPA OECA/Office of Compliance

And the following non-voting members:

- Africa Dorame-Avalos, TPPC Representative
- Bob Blankenburg, AAPCO Director-at-large
- Otto Oemig, AAPCO Director-at-large
- John Pitcock, ASPCRO Liaison
- Kelly Engle, EPA PIRT Liaison
- Cindy Wire, EPA PREP Project Officer

The PREP team worked with the Steering Committee to assess the needs of the PREP community by reviewing previous course curricula and evaluations, new topic suggestions and requests for additional resources by previous participants, annual feedback from the PREP community, the historical PREP course rotation, and priority issues identified by other related stakeholder groups. Taking into considerations all these needs, we established a schedule for the 2026 PREP Courses. On January 14, 2026, we had still not received an award notification, so had to make the decision not to hold an April course. The updated 2026 schedule is:

1. New and Emerging Technology, June 22-25, 2026, Fort Collins, CO
2. Structural Pest Control Issues (*tentative*), August 3-6, 2026, Fort Collins, CO or Decatur, GA
3. Endangered Species Combo, September 21-24, 2026, Fort Collins, CO

Issues to be raised for discussion by the AAPCO Board:

Funding for PREP in the last year has been uncertain. We received a notice of immediate termination for the PREP award on April 22, 2025, with instructions not to continue any work on the agreement. On May 1, 2025, we received notice that our termination had been rescinded. We appreciate the work the AAPCO board did to get this reversed.

Our initial agreement, awarded in 2019, officially terminated on September 30, 2025. Though we responded to EPA Funding Opportunity EPA-OCSPP-OPS-2024-009 to compete for the opportunity to continue work on the PREP for an additional 5 years in November 2024, we did not receive notice we were awarded the agreement until January 20, 2026 (though the agreement is back dated to October 1, 2025). Further, we have received \$285,000 of the total \$535,000 that was awarded. We don't have a clear indication when the remaining funds will be sent. As such, the number of courses we can host and the number of participants we can serve in 2026 remains uncertain.

General Summary of activities for the 2025 Season:

Continued Work on the PREP Website

The PREP Network website was updated in the following ways:

1. Landing page
 - a. Overview and link to 2025 course pages, including topic, dates, and locations for each
 - b. List of Steering Committee members
2. A course page for each of the four planned courses that includes:
 - a. Location
 - b. Audience
 - c. Course goal
 - d. Nomination and participants
 - e. Planning group
3. PREP mailing list which is comprised of key contacts at state, tribe, and territory regulatory agencies, and U.S. EPA that we use to distribute course and nomination announcements
4. PREP Team
 - a. Team member photos were updated
5. Archived courses
 - a. 2024 PREP courses were added

Continued Microsoft Teams PREP Network

We continued to expand our Microsoft Teams site for the PREP Network. For each course, there is a subject matter-specific channel. All attendees are added to a channel, but also have access to the entire site. We post course documents, pose discussion questions brought up during the courses and in the evaluations, and post participant-filmed videos discussing issues they encounter in their work. This is designed to be an additional avenue for networking and sharing strategies. This site has remained active for online and in-person courses.

Continued PREP Archive

We continued growing our PREP Archive, which only the PREP community has access to. It contains all the content from every course, including presentations, discussion notes, and participant resources. Participants have access to the entire archive, not just the materials from their course.

Continued Adding to the PREP Database

The database serves the needs of the team by providing quick and efficient access to key information. The information can be used to improve reporting, address inquiries and questions regarding past courses and provide key insights into the future implementation of the program. We add data on nominees, participants, and speakers to the database after every course. Since we now have a complete participant roster from 1990 to 2025, we have started providing a “Congrats and Attendance” document to all course participants that have previously attended a PREP course. It gives them a summary of how many and which courses they’ve completed.

Highlights from 2025 PREP Courses:

1. Senior Executive Program Management PREP Course, June 24-26, Fort Collins, CO

We convened six 1.5-hour long planning group meetings between January 22 and March 12 to refine the target audience and course goal, identify major topic areas, develop the agenda and finalize nominations.

The **target audience** for this course is new and experienced senior-level state, territory, and tribal pesticide program managers with direct responsibility for the implementation of their agency’s pesticide program.

The **goal of the course** is to provide participants with an opportunity to build and foster relationships and communication networks and to strengthen and enhance leadership skills.

Major topic areas for the course are:

- Addressing key programmatic and communication topics between EPA & coregulators
- Adapting to programmatic changes and challenges
- Strategies for leading strong teams and managing conflict

Nominations for this course opened on February 6, 2025, and closed on March 6th, 2025. Notifications were sent to nominees by March 20, 2025.

Key data points for this course:

- We received a total of 29 nominations: 26 state, 1 tribal, and 2 EPA
- We invited 27 total participants: 24 state, 1 tribal, and 2 EPA.
- We hosted 25 participants: 23 state, 1 territory, and 1 tribal
- We hosted 25 speakers: 2 state, 7 EPA, 11 state participant, 1 tribal participant, 2 university, and 1 private

2. Comprehensive Combo, August 4-7, Fort Collins, CO

We convened five 1.5-hour long planning group meetings between December 11 and April 23 to refine the target audience and course goal, identify major topic areas, develop the agenda and finalize nominations. This course was initially scheduled for April, but at the request of EPA, we postponed it.

The **target audience** for this course is new and experienced staff who work under a FIFRA cooperative agreement. This includes staff who are currently in a leadership role or aspire to be in one.

The **goal of the course** is to provide basic information on pesticide program structure, coordination, communication, and current issues related to federal, state, tribal, and territory pesticide regulatory programs.

Major topic areas for the course are:

- Fundamentals of pesticide regulation and registration
- Pesticide enforcement basics
- EPA’s structure, the FIFRA Cooperative Agreement Guidance, and co-regulator relationships
- Hot topics, such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA), bilingual labeling, certification plans, and emerging technologies.

Initial nominations for this course opened on January 9, 2025, and closed on February 6, 2025. Notifications were scheduled to be sent to nominees on February 13, 2025, but the course dates were changed prior to this deadline. The nominees were notified of the change, and no acceptance notifications were sent. On March 27, 2025, nominees were contacted about the new course dates and asked to confirm whether they wish to stay on the nomination list. They were asked to confirm their nomination by April 8, 2025. Acceptance notification was sent on May 15, 2025.

Key data points for this course:

- For the initial nomination window, we received a total of 48 nominations: 36 state, 1 territory, 5 tribal, 5 EPA, and one other.
- During the nomination confirmation window, 9 nominees rescinded their nomination due to change in course dates. One state nominee elected another individual in their agency to fill their nomination. This led to a total of 40 confirmed nominations: 32 state, 1 territory, 5 tribal, and 2 EPA.
- We hosted 28 participants: 24 state, 3 tribal, and 1 EPA.
- We hosted 23 speakers: 3 state, 8 state participant, 1 tribal participant, 8 EPA, and 3 university

PREP Participant Data for Courses Conducted in the 2025 Season

PREP Course and Dates	# nominations received					# participants attended (#invited, if different from attended)				
	Total	State	Ter.	Tribe	EPA	Total	State	Ter.	Tribe	EPA
Senior Executive Program Management June 24-26, 2025 Fort Collins, Colorado	29	26	0	1	2	25	23	1	1	0
Comprehensive Combo August 4-7, 2025 Fort Collins, Colorado	40	32	1	5	2	28	24	0	3	1

PREP Courses Planned for 2026:

1. New and Emerging Technology, June 22-25, 2026, Fort Collins, CO

The target audience is personnel who work under a FIFRA cooperative agreement. The course goal is to share information on new and emerging technologies and the issues these tools create related to pesticide program management and enforcement.

2. Structural Pest Control Issues (tentative), August 3-6, 2026, Fort Collins, CO or Decatur, GA

The target audience is personnel who work under a FIFRA cooperative agreement with responsibilities for regulating pesticide use in and around structures. The course goal is to enhance a participants' ability to meet the present challenges and complexities of regulating and enforcing pesticide use in and around structures.

3. Endangered Species Combo, September 21-24, 2026, Fort Collins, CO

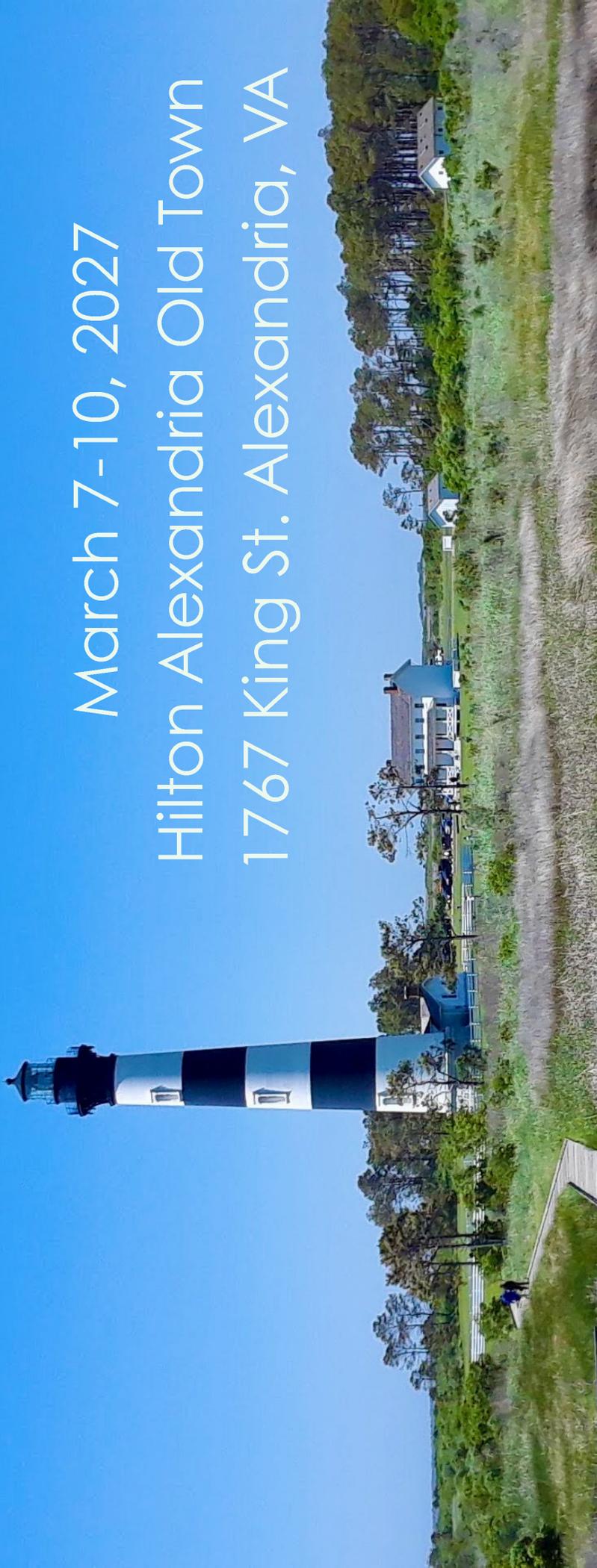
The target audience for the Endangered Species Combo course is personnel that work under a FIFRA cooperative agreement involved in pesticide label review and/or programmatic activities related to enforcing labels. A group of participants with diverse experiences is expected. The course goal is to understand the Endangered Species Act (ESA), its implementation in the registration process, and how it impacts pesticide compliance and enforcement.

SAVE THE DATE!

Please Join Us for AAPCO's
80th Annual Spring Meeting and Conference

March 7-10, 2027

Hilton Alexandria Old Town
1767 King St. Alexandria, VA



AAPCO LIFE MEMBERSHIP/MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

2026

RECOMMENDATIONS

Respectfully submitted by

Life Membership and Memorials Committee

J. Patrick Jones

February 25, 2026

LIFE MEMBERSHIP NOMINATION:

Leo Reed

Office of Indiana State Chemist

Nominated by

Sarah Caffrey

Brian Verhougstraete

Office of Indiana State Chemist

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
Development

February 25, 2026

Nomination for AAPCO Life Membership

Submitted with the Utmost Regulatory Gravity and the Full Weight of Bureaucratic Tradition

To the AAPCO Life Membership Committee:

In a bold and unprecedented move befitting the magnitude of his contributions, we hereby submit this nomination for Leo Reed to receive Life Membership with the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO). An honor long reserved for those whose service can only be described as “heroic,” “historic,” or “unreasonably patient in the face of federal rulemaking.”

Introduction: Recognizing an Unmatched Regulatory Force

For years, Leo has been a steadfast, unflinching, and subtle presence within AAPCO and among State Lead Agencies (SLAs). The effect his FIFRA work has had on society rivals that of other landmark federal initiatives, including the New Deal and the Voting Rights Act. Yet unlike those actions, Leo’s efforts came without a 200-page Federal Register notice or a 90-day public comment period.

2020 was a time of great uncertainty. The world was crippled by the pandemic and pesticide programs across the Midwest were embroiled in unprecedented dicamba complaints. But as President of AAPCO, Leo united all by leading his fellow pesticide regulators out of depths of disfunction and despair. Lesser men would have crumbled under the immense pressure, but not Leo. His role with Certification and Licensing places him atop the certification-rule mountain, where few

dared to climb. He endeavored to preserve and will be remembered - in his own mind - as the greatest leader in the history of AAPCO.

Justification for Nomination: Leo's Monumental Support for SLAs

This nomination rests on Leo's extraordinary, borderline-superhuman support for SLAs during national implementation of the Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule (40 CFR 171).

1. He Interpreted Federal Requirements Without Requiring a Translator

The certification rule's timelines, legal authorities, competency requirements, and submission standards are laid out across 40 CFR Part 171 and dense EPA Q&A documents. While others saw an impenetrable labyrinth of regulatory text, Leo saw... well, still a labyrinth, but one he willingly entered so that SLAs didn't have to wander it alone.

He was also instrumental in the development of the security protocol known as "random page order" that ensured Indiana's certification plan could only be deciphered by its author.

2. He Acted as a Stabilizing Force During Plan Creation and Revisions

As states prepared multiple drafts of their certification plans for EPA, Leo provided guidance, patience, and the kind of calm that only comes from reading thousands of pages of federal regulation without screaming. OK, maybe there was some screaming.

3. He Ensured State Regulators Didn't Spiral into Existential Despair

The national certification-rule rollout introduced operational uncertainty, shifting federal expectations, and a steady stream of new guidance documents. During this time, Leo became the unofficial emotional support human for SLAs nationwide; fielding questions, clarifying requirements, and stepping in with the regulatory equivalent of a gentle giant equipped with a warm blanket and a soothing cup of chamomile tea.

Service Beyond the Certification Rule

Before his national leadership, Leo's had decades of service within the state of Indiana with law enforcement and the Office of Indiana State Chemist. This history grounded him in enforcement, investigations, and applicator education. From day one of his career, he has been committed to gold-standard science and radical transparency.

A Career Deserving of Recognition

In all seriousness, Leo is well deserving of AAPCO's Life Membership award. For over 30 years he has been actively involved in the Association as both a participant and a leader. SLA's and AAPCO have benefited greatly from Leo's certification work and the relationships he's fostered with EPA, SLAs, and regulated stakeholders. Over the years Leo has mentored many colleagues who have become leaders in the Association and in their state agencies. While some who are unfamiliar with Leo label him as the outspoken old guy from Indiana in jean shorts; those who know him respect him greatly and recognize him for his exceptional work ethic, dedication, generosity, and sense of humor.

We are sure to have forgotten many examples of how Leo Reed has supported us over the years. His contributions to the Association and his magnitude of service to his fellow SLAs cannot easily fit within this short Life Membership nomination.

Three cheers to Leo. The Myth. The Legend. The Hero. We will strive to follow in his footsteps and continue to carry the co-regulator torch as we stand together to expand on his Three C's for not only pesticide labels but all pesticide regulations – to be Clear, Concise, and Crap-Free.

We therefore urge the committee to approve this nomination decisively, enthusiastically, and perhaps even with the ceremonial band and military parade. We only wish that we would have had more time to write this nomination entirely on our own without the support of Microsoft Copilot. Copilot wholeheartedly agrees with Leo Reed's nomination, even though it appears to have embellished, a bit.

Congratulations, Leo Reed. Thank you for all that you have done!

Sincerely,

Brian Verhougstraete

Sarah K Caffery

Michigan Department

Office of Indiana State Chemist

February 26, 2026

Nancy Fitz
EPA
Nominated by

Iowa Dept. Of Agriculture and
Land Stewardship

Office of Indiana State Chemist

Patrick Jones

Chair, AAPCO Life Membership and Memorials
Committee Director of Pesticide Programs

North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer
Services Raleigh, NC 27607

Dear Mr. Pat Jones,

I am writing to nominate Ms. Nancy Fitz for life membership in the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO). Nancy's educational background was rooted in environmental engineering, including a degree in Engineering at Dartmouth College (1989) and Biochemical Engineering at Thayer School of Engineering (1990). Nancy earned her Masters degree in Environmental Engineering from the University of Maryland in 1994. Her work in pesticide-related regulations with the United States Environmental Protection Agency began in 1989, and additional regulatory work extended out to January 2025. This incredible career included the following highlights and leadership:

- Acting team leader of the Minor Use Team in OPP's Registration Division on detail from January 7, 2018 – May 6, 2018.
- Chair of the OPP Respirator Workgroup, 2015 – present.
- Team leader for implementation of the Worker Protection Standard, 2015 – present.
- Leader of team that developed and implemented regulations on pesticide containers and containment structures, 1996 - 2014.
- EPA liaison (non-voting) to the Board of Directors of The Pesticide Stewardship Alliance (TPSA), 2001 – present; organized TPSA's annual conference in 2004, 2013 and 2014.
- Co-chair of an American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers committee that developed a voluntary consensus standard on recycling pesticide containers, 2005 - 2006.

In addition to her time working in pesticide regulations, some may not know that Nancy is also recognized by the United States Rugby Foundation for her skilled play and coaching abilities. In 2023, Nancy was recognized as a recipient of the Kathy Flores Lifetime Achievement Award. This annual award recognizes those in the rugby

community who exemplify the collegial spirit, commitment to lifelong learning, vision, and generosity that defined Kathy Flores. It was the first time the award was given to leaders in the women's game and women's rugby community. The U. S. Rugby Foundation quotes, "It truly sums up the essence and pedigree of Nancy Fitz. A true rugby legend." <https://www.usrugbyfoundation.org/hall-of-fame-members/nancy-fitz>

Nancy's work in so many areas has shown a willingness to take on a challenge; fully engage; and see things through to completion. This level of dedication truly deserves to be recognized because it is a unique quality that has benefited not only EPA, but the broader AAPCO membership.

In 2016, EPA was working on the Worker Protection regulation changes, and Nancy traveled to the EPA Region 7 Inspector Workshop. She made two presentations covering the Worker Protection Standard and Container/Containment regulations. Nancy gave everyone in the audience something to think about as they left the meeting - pride in their work, a better understanding of the foundation of the program, and a call to action for the future. This training was marked by some to be one of the best EPA regional inspector meetings in years.

I have no doubt other state pesticide regulators and colleagues that have worked with Nancy are well familiar with the leadership she brought to Pesticide Worker Protection, Applicator Certification, and Container/Containment programs. These outstanding contributions will continue to benefit the AAPCO membership and are well deserved of recognition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gretchen Paluch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Gretchen Paluch, Ph.D.

Pesticide Bureau Chief

Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship

1305 Walnut St. Des Moines, IA 50319

Gretchen.Paluch@lowaAgriculture.gov

Encl: Summary of Regulatory Work

NANCY E. FITZ

EDUCATION

- 1994 University of Maryland, College Park, MD
M.S. in Civil (Environmental) Engineering
- 1990 Thayer School of Engineering, Hanover,
NH
B.E. with a focus in Biochemical
Engineering
- 1989 Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
B.A. with a major in Engineering

EMPLOYMENT

Environmental Protection Specialist (GS-0028, grade 14) in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP), Registration Division, Acting Team Leader of the Minor Use Team, full time, temporary detail from January 7, 2018 - May 6, 2018.

Environmental Protection Specialist (GS-0028, grade 14) in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP), full time, February 15, 2009 - present.

Chemical Engineer (GS-0893, grade 7 to 13) in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, OPP, full time, September 24, 1989- February 14, 2009. Before the detail in early 2018, I had the same job working on pesticide-related regulations from 1989 to 2018 but changed series to apply for a GS-14 position.

LEADERSHIP

- Acting team leader of the Minor Use Team in OPP's Registration Division on detail from January 7, 2018-May 6, 2018.
- Chair of the OPP Respirator Workgroup, 2015 - present.
- Team leader for implementation of the Worker Protection Standard, 2015 - present.
- Leader of team that developed and implemented regulations on pesticide containers and containment structures, 1996 - 2014.
- EPA liaison (non-voting) to the Board of Directors of The Pesticide Stewardship Alliance (TPSA), 2001 - present; organized TPSA's annual conference in 2004, 2013 and 2014.
- Co-chair of an American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers committee that developed a voluntary consensus standard on recycling pesticide containers, 2005 - 2006.

ACTING LEADER OF THE MINOR USE TEAM

For the first four months of 2018, I filled the position in this job announcement on a temporary basis. The key tasks included:

- In-processing tolerance petitions from the Interregional Research Project #4 (IR-4) on behalf of minor use crop growers under the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act.
- Managing and updating data within the Office of Pesticide Programs Information (OPPIN) tracking system.
- Working with multidisciplinary teams that conduct drinking water and human health risk assessments to analyze and respond to tolerance petitions.
- Preparing and reviewing tolerance regulations for minor use crops under the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.
- Tracking the development of the Minor Use Team's tolerance regulations.
- Coordinating scientific reviews of chemicals with regulatory agencies in Canada and California.
- Communicating with IR-4 and other stakeholders on scientific and regulatory issues.

REGULATION DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

As chair of the OPP Respirator Workgroup, I lead a multi-disciplinary group of scientists and risk managers working to revise the descriptions of respirators on pesticide labels. This work included reviewing OPP's current occupational risk assessment procedures, respirator descriptions on pesticide labels and other federal agency standards; identifying discrepancies; and developing solutions.

Involved with writing or substantially revising three sets of current regulations under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA): the pesticide container-containment regulations, the Worker Protection Standard and the Pesticide Applicator Certification rule.

Technical and team leader for the pesticide container regulations from 1996 to 2006, which included publishing Federal Register notices in 1994 (proposed rule), 1999 and 2004 (supplemental notices), 2006 (final rule) and 2008 (amendments to the final rule). The team also developed implementation documents and conducted outreach. Team leader responsibilities included delegating work assignments, resolving issues and reporting to management.

Member of the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) regulation team from 2014 to 2015. Helped develop the final WPS rule published in November 2015, presented during briefings for senior EPA managers, and led the analysis of incidents for the benefits analysis.

Team leader of the WPS implementation team, 2015 to present. Tasks include planning outreach activities; training regional, state and tribal program managers and inspectors; presenting to industry and other stakeholders; developing and reviewing guidance and educational materials; and responding to inquiries.

Member of the Pesticide Applicator Certification revision and implementation team from 2014 to present. Helped develop the final certification rule published in January 2017, presented during briefings for senior EPA managers, and led the analysis of incidents for the benefits analysis.

Regulatory development tasks have included: writing and revising the regulatory text and preamble to respond to internal and external comments; reviewing scientific papers and analyzing them in terms of the regulations; giving presentations to senior EPA leadership, co-regulators (states and tribes) and the regulated community; answering technical questions about the rule, including how the regulations apply to pesticide reviews and registration actions; conducting environmental, human health and benefits analyses; as well as analyzing, summarizing and responding to the public comments.

OTHER REGULATIONS

Have worked on pesticide disposal and packaging issues that intersect with other federal laws, including the Food Quality Protection Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Department of Transportation Hazardous Materials Transportation Act.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

- 28 years of outreach and gathering information through technical and policy discussions with states and tribes, industry representatives, trade groups, pesticide safety educators at land-grant universities and other stakeholders.
- Instructor for an international EPA course on pesticide disposal in developing countries, delivered in Indonesia (1997).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Outside Leadership Activities

- Instructor for USA Rugby coaching and strength and conditioning courses, 2003 - present.
- Rugby coaching: Assistant 7s coach of NOVA women's club, 2014-present; head coach of Washington Women's Football Club (WNRFC), 2009 - 2012; head coach of Georgetown University's women's team, 2007 - 2009; assistant coach of WWRFC, 2004 -

2005; assistant coach of US Naval Academy women's team, 2002 - 2003.

- Player on the U.S. national rugby team, 1996 - 2002, including captain of the 15s rugby team 1999 - 2002 and captain of the 7s rugby team 1998 - 1999.

Contact Information

E-mail addresses: nancy.fitz67@gmail.com
and fitz.nancy@epa.gov Phone numbers:
703-305-7385 (day) and 202-255-5902 (cell)

Supervisor

Kevin Keaney, Chief of the Certification and Worker Protection Branch in the Field and External Affairs Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, OPP. Contact information: 703-305-5557 and keaney.kevin@epa.gov

MEMORIAL RECOGNITION:



Jim Wells

First Director, California Dept. of Pesticide Regulation

Jake Mackenzie informed us of the passing of Jim Wells. Jack Neylan remembers him fondly as a good guy to work with during his EPA Enforcement days. His obituary reads as follows:

James Wells Obituary

James (Jim) Woodrow Wells, age 79, passed away at home in Rio Oso, CA, on Saturday, September 27, 2025. Born on October 17, 1945, in Glendale, CA, Jim lived in the city of San Fernando throughout his childhood and early adult years.

Jim was a devoted husband and amazing father who demonstrated a complete and unconditional love for his family every day. He was a great man and the many words on this page cannot possibly describe the breadth of his character or the love his family felt for him. He was affectionate and caring; devoted and dependable; gentle and nurturing; compassionate and generous; warmhearted; fiercely loyal and protective; hardworking and steadfast; brave and responsible. He was so smart, funny, and so humble. Jim was the heart and the rock of his family. He will be forever missed and never forgotten.

Jim is survived by his wife Jennifer; children Jimmy (Megan), Jack (Ali), Bobby, Billy, Sarah Thornton (Thomas); Grandchildren Cody, Kyle, Cole, William, Christopher, Finn and Walter; multiple great-grandchildren; Brothers Raymond, Russell (Irene), lifelong friend Mike Aldrich (Ammie); nieces and nephews Devyn Frey (Jason), Parker (Caroline), Aaron, Gwendolyn, Delaney, Julie Crigler; and beloved cousins Mike Santander (Susan), Doug Santander (Lillian), and Debbie Betts. Jim is preceded in death by his parents Clyde and Alice and his older brother Bill.

Jim was a member of the first graduating class at Sylmar Highschool in February of 1963 and went on to take classes at Pierce College in Woodland Hills before eventually receiving a B.S. in Zoology from U.C. Davis in 1972. At UC Davis he had planned on pursuing a graduate level degree continuing his study of the communication behaviors of Patas monkeys before his career took him in a different direction.

Jim's first job in the agriculture industry was as a tomato inspector in the Gilroy area for the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). Jim was dedicated to his work and motivated to succeed, as evidenced by his rapid ascension through the ranks of CDFA. He was also a great listener and understood the challenges that farmers faced because of the increasing regulatory burdens that he was tasked with enforcing. In 1981, Jim was promoted to Chief of Pesticide Enforcement for the entire state and relocated to the Sacramento area (Yuba City). Jim was highly regarded by growers and the greater agriculture industry even as he enacted major changes to California agricultural policy from his office in Sacramento. Jim would make frequent visits to Washington D.C. as a member of the Federal EPA's Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee, Food Safety Advisory Committee for the Food Quality Protection Act, and Worker Protection Advisory Committee for the Federal Worker Protection Standard. Jim was passionate about farmworker safety and was proud to have assisted the federal government in creating new standards which mirrored much of the work that had already been implemented in California.

In 1991, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) was created, including a new Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR). Jim was appointed by Governor Pete Wilson as the first director of the new department and served until retirement from the state in 1998. Over the following years, Jim held executive positions at Exponent; Novigen Sciences; and Jellinek, Schwartz and Connelly. Later, Jim partnered with George Soares to form his own consultancy, Environmental Solutions Group, a firm specializing in environmental regulatory and policy issues related to pesticide and agricultural chemicals registration and defense, water and air quality and Proposition 65. At retirement, Jim had over 40 years of experience in pesticide regulation and enforcement.

Throughout his career, Jim served on many advisory boards and committees. Notably, Jim spent nearly 20 years on the Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee (MBTOC) of the Montreal Protocol, an international treaty of the United Nations Environment Program. The committee was tasked with managing the phase-out of Methyl Bromide by identifying alternatives and granting "critical use exemptions" where necessary. MBTOC meetings took Jim to Kenya, South Africa, Senegal, Morocco, Chile, Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico, China, Thailand, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Israel, Turkey, Japan, and Australia. Jim made great friends and enjoyed his time with his fellow committee members over the years.

Family and friends often joked with Jim that with a travel schedule like his, surely, he must have been engaged in intelligence gathering, not "pesticide regulation." In 1980 they would have been right, but he wasn't slinking around in Bangkok, Paris or Amsterdam. No, Jim instead had the privilege of chasing empty barrels around San Joaquin valley towns like Selma, Dinuba and Tulare. At the time, he held a dual appointment as the Fresno region's Field Supervisor for Pesticide Enforcement and as a Special Agent for the California Department of Justice. He and his partner, the late Bill Stoller, investigated the illegal use and distribution of the banned fumigant DBCP in the San Joaquin Valley. The investigation culminated with the two of them driving an 18-wheeler south towards the Mexican border (luckily, they headed east into Arizona) where they loaded up with black-market DBCP as part of an undercover operation. Jim leaned into the part with his long hair, trucker hat and a pack of Marlboro Reds rolled up in his shirt sleeve. His family loved to hear that story no matter how many times it had been told before.

As focused as Jim was in his professional life, he was equally tenacious when it came to recreation.

He loved to camp and fish, and he loved the journeys to get there. Driving up rough windy forest roads looking for the perfect fishing hole, checking his notebook for the mileages where a turn should be expected, a map bigger than the windshield in his cupholder, these were the moments Jim lived for and excelled in. He loved his home away from home at Lake Almanor where he had spent many summers over the last half century. He was a voracious reader and a student of history. He loved Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, Reuben sandwiches and Dominican cigars. He loved listening to music and had an impressive collection of records and mixtapes. He loved his family and was endlessly amazed and impressed by their goings-on. He loved to relax, and he was good at it too.

Possibly his most defining avocation was that he was a huge football fan. A lifelong Los Angeles (and St. Louis) Rams and USC Trojans fan, he wore their respective shirts and hats on Saturdays and Sundays and was sure to drink from his Rams mug on Sundays. While the Trojans never failed to disappoint him, he was steadfast in his fandom. His father Clyde had been getting his Pharmacy degree at USC when Jim was an infant, and on the day of his passing Jim had looked forward to watching a big game between USC and Illinois. He was literally a life-long fan, and now his family will carry that torch for him.

When Jim took the Chief of Pesticide Enforcement job in Sacramento, he moved to Yuba City where his childhood friend Mike Aldrich had relocated some years earlier. Later, Jim and Jennifer married, bought some property, and built a home in Rio Oso with young sons Jimmy and Jack. As a young boy, Jim had always dreamed of having some property and the privacy that comes with it. At home, he loved gardening, caring for his roses and digging up various plants that weren't doing well to find them a better spot. Ten acres of eucalyptus trees kept him busy too. Over the course of his nearly 30 years on the property he installed many miles of drip line and many dozens of irrigation timers. He also had about fifteen 1-gallon pump sprayers specifically labeled for each of his favorite pesticide mixes which he would fill and spray carefully, while wearing the appropriate protective equipment of course. The last several years he had been in brutal conflict with squirrels who wreaked havoc on his hoses and sprinklers. Even so, he maintained a true oasis for his family, up to and extending past his last day with us. He loved to look at the stars and would stand outside staring up at the sky late into the night. Jim loved being reminded of his southern California childhood through the handful of palms and pepper trees he planted in the backyard. Jim often commented that he had achieved his boyhood dreams and how happy he was to be here.



Industry Relations Workgroup Report February 10, 2026

Co-Chair, Derrick Lastinger (GA)
Co-Chair, Janet Hou (BASF)

The AAPCO Industry Relations Workgroup submits the following report for the 2026 Board of Directors annual meeting.

The AAPCO Industry Relations Workgroup (IRWG) was established to maintain an open dialogue with the pesticide industry and provide a forum to discuss industry issues and concerns with pesticide regulatory officials. The workgroup maintains communication with the AAPCO board to ensure efficient and effective efforts between the groups.

Activities

Meetings

The workgroup met on December 18, 2025, on Microsoft Teams prior to the December full SFIREG Meeting. The meeting included 32 attendees. The workgroup discussed the following items:

1. Brian Verhougstraete (MI) – provided an overview of 2026 conference agenda topics and theme.
2. Otto Oemig (WI) – discussed the poster session opportunity and application process.
3. 2026 AAPCO Conference Agenda and theme “Focusing on the value of AAPCO and partnerships that foster collaboration and drive meaningful change” to be held March 1-4 at the Hilton Old Town Alexandria, Virginia. The group noted topics that may benefit with industry participation and provided speaker suggestions for AAPCO to consider.
4. This year AAPCO invited the workgroup to create a 90-minute Industry Relations Forum to take place on Tuesday, March 3rd starting at 10:30 AM. The work group discussed a session to focus on the different industry associations and share how they are navigating some of the past/present challenges. This session will provide relevant information to all types of attendees.
 - Growing Matters – Caydee Savinelli, Syngenta, Head US Crop Protection Stewardship
 - American Seed Trade Association – Jordan Gregory, Director State Government Affairs
 - Association of Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials – Speaker TBD
 - National Pest Management Association – Dr. Michael Bentley, Vice President of Training and Technical Services and Bonnie Rabe, Rollins Director of Government Relations

5. Welcome reception and the return of the poster session opportunity. Potential topics were discussed for the poster session and Otto invited those interested to submit an application or reach out to him directly. Some poster suggestions included PRIA6 and the PRIA Coalition, and Product Stewardship.
6. The group discussed keeping engaged throughout the year and looking for ideas to make the most of the workgroup.
7. Derrick will follow-up with the AAPCO Planning committee.

Future Activities

The workgroup plans to create additional opportunities to bring industry representatives together with state lead agencies to share perspectives on issues of interest. Examples including starting conversations surrounding the use of mosquito mist blowers, sharing stewardship activities concerning neonicotinoids or other classes of chemistries, and answering questions from states about registration approaches.

AAPCO REPORT TO MEMBERSHIP
AAPCO Pollinator Protection Workgroup
Chair: Patrick Jones (North Carolina)
March 2026

Workgroup Activities March 2025-March 2026:

There is not a lot of activity to report for this fiscal year.

The AAPCO Pollinator Protection Workgroup in conjunction with representatives from numerous state lead agencies (SLAs), developed the biennial survey to capture the efforts of SLA Pollinator Protection Plans. The survey is set to be sent out in the fall of 2026. We will need to revisit some of the survey questions.

Response to the last survey was light with 18 responses. This survey serves as a national assessment and is a useful tool to capture SLA pollinator protection activities.

With the retirement of past members, the Pollinator Protection Workgroup is actively soliciting for new workgroup members. Interested parties are encouraged to contact Pat Jones, NC, or the AAPCO-SFIREG Executive Secretary, Amy Sullivan. We could use more members from across the country.

In EPA's response to the SFIREG Issue paper regarding pesticide misuse with the beekeeping industry, EPA requested that state lead agencies provide more information about the allegations of misuse and any related incident data (i.e., specific data on incidents from registered products and/or unregistered/misbranded products, including specific language for each product that results in states considering the product to be misbranded). We will need to ensure that we provide this information to EPA.

If you have any questions or if you are interested in serving on the {Pollinator Committee – please let me know.

Sincerely, Patrick Jones



FIFRA 25(b) Workgroup 2025 Annual Report

February 12, 2026

SLA Co-Chairs:

- Daniel Duer (Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture)
- Samantha Tochen (Washington State Department of Agriculture)

Industry Chair

- Kim Nemeth (Procter & Gamble)

Members: 48 SLAs and 180 Industry Representatives

Current list of members can be found here: <https://aapco.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-02-12-25b-Workgroup-Participants.xlsx>

General Summary of Activities for 2025:

Industry Initiatives:

- 25b Industry WG partnered with Tory from OISC to author a document that clarifies which insects require qualification on the label of minimum risk pesticides registered in the state of IN.
- The AAPCO 25b Industry WG discussed with States a proposal to seek a joint, subsequent meeting with EPA to discuss concerns in the minimum risk pesticide space, with the suggestion to document meeting proceedings as guidance that could be utilized by states and industry moving forward. This would be proposed in lieu of rulemaking that would not be possible without additional funding for EPA. The need for EPA to onboard a new administration, the government shutdown and states' pesticide renewal season delayed any follow-up until 2026.
- Industry finished their revision of the Efficacy Guidance document, in which they broke the guidance down into separate chapters that discussed different classes of pesticides. States provided feedback, and it led to development of implementation language explaining compliance with any updated guidance would be expected in 18 months. SLAs and Industry are discussing the specifics of such language, and should have the guidance completed in 2026
- Industry also reviewed proposed revisions to the inert ingredient guidance. As the SLA revisions to the document were quite extensive, this process has taken some time to resolve



State Initiatives:

Over the course of the year, SLAs collaborated on the following topics:

Topic	Different Occurrences
Ingredients	19
Claims & Labels	22
Non-Compliant Products	13
Efficacy	1
Regulation Updates	2

- SLAs worked on updating the absence of ingredients guidance to reflect EPA’s revised policy. This will address “DEET free,” as well as some other common claims. A draft has been generated, and will be reviewed by the workgroup shortly
- SLA Co-Chairs joined the 25(b) Workgroup session of the Household & Commercial Products Association (HCPA) mid-year meeting in June to provide an update on the role of the AAPCO 25b WG to membership.
- States completed their first draft of the revised Inert Ingredient Guidance. Updates included additional background information on food use sites, addition of FAQs and commonly consumed food information, revisions to acceptable limits and previously included information for inerts, addition of new inert ingredients of concern, corrections to the inert tolerance table. The industry workgroup is currently reviewing the guidance for feedback.
- The Label Guidance revisions were put on hold until the Absence of Ingredients Guidance is revised, and Washington State’s 25(b) guidance is revised

Issues to Present to the AAPCO Board and Membership

No concerns to present to the AAPCO board at this time.

To view our current guidance documents: <https://aapco.org/2015/07/02/fifra-25b-workgroup/>

To be added to the workgroup membership, email the appropriate chair:

SLA Co-Chairs:

- Daniel Duer (daduer@pa.gov)
- Samantha Tochen (Samantha.Tochen@agr.wa.gov)

Industry Chair:

- Kim Nemeth (Nemeth.ka@pg.com)



AAPCO Technology Workgroup Report

February 20, 2026

The mission of the AAPCO technology workgroup is to work with states, US EPA, and other stakeholders to gain a thorough understanding of issues associated with the use of new technologies within the existing regulatory framework, help develop guidance that will ensure consistent compliance interpretation and assistance and serve as a communication hub on these topics.

Members

Chair: Nathan Davis, Office of the Indiana State Chemist
Zachary Szczukowski, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
Lauren Gott, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Jason Williams, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Christopher Sutherland, Washington State Department of Agriculture

The workgroup is searching for additional members. If you or someone with your agency have an interest in pesticide technology and want to become an active member of the workgroup, please contact Nathan Davis or a member of the technology workgroup.

Leadership

Since April 2024, the workgroup has been led by Nathan Davis with the Office of the Indiana State Chemist. Nathan has been a member of the workgroup since April 2022.

Outreach

In March 2025, Nathan presented at the Spray Drone End User Conference in Mobile, Alabama. Nathan presented a state regulatory update on pesticide applications with drones.

In April 2025, Nathan presented at the CropLife America RISE Regulatory Conference in Arlington, Virginia. Nathan was on a panel and discussed how drones fit into the current regulatory framework.



In August 2025, Nathan presented to EPA and USDA at Corteva Agriscience's Regulatory Field Days in Chestertown, Maryland. Nathan discussed current state regulatory concerns with pesticide application made by drones.

In December 2025, Nathan presented at SFIREG in Alexandria, Virginia. Nathan discussing drone labeling issues and issues related to the proposed FAA rule Part 108 Beyond Visual Line of Sight.

In January 2026, Nathan presented at the Spray Drone End User Conference in Kansas City Missouri. Nathan presented on current state regulatory concerns with pesticide application made by drones and reviewed those concerns with the audience during a panel discussion.

Collaborations

In 2025, the workgroup continued to participate in the Pesticide Educational Resource Collaborative (PERC) Task Force on Educational Materials Related to Pesticide Applications Using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) led by Dwight Seal. In August 2025, PERC announced the release of the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Task Force Recommendations Report, training content designed to support states, tribes, and territories in the certification of pesticide applicators using UAS.

In 2025, the workgroup partnered with CropLife America as a planning member of the Drones and Labeling Workshop. The workshop is 3-part virtual series that will bring together drone and pesticide stakeholders to explore drone labeling. The first workshop was held in November. Participants were chosen based on their drone or labeling experience. The next series in the workshop is tentatively planned for summer 2026.

In November 2025, the workgroup worked with Dr. Dan Martin to coordinate complimentary virtual attendance for pesticide regulators and educators to the Remote Pilot and Aerial Application Association conference (RPASS). Over 100 pesticide regulators and educators signed up for this conference.



In 2026, Nathan and Zach joined the planning group for the Pesticide Regulatory Education Program (PREP) New and Emerging Technology course. The course goal is to share the benefits and challenges of new and emerging technologies as they relate to pesticide program management and enforcement.

Moving Forward

Spray drone applications continue to grow and be the most discussed pesticide application technology. The workgroup will continue to be active in drone labeling and regulation discussions. The workgroup will monitor the proposed FAA rule Part 108 Beyond Visual Line of Sight and any impact it may have on state pesticide regulation. The workgroup will research autonomous ground spray application equipment and any impacts it may have on state pesticide regulations.

2026 REPORT TO AAPCO E-COMMERCE WORKGROUP

While the conversations surrounding the sales and distributions of pesticides via e-Commerce is not a new topic, it does continue to be a topic of interest. One of the ongoing issues includes EPA's differentiation between an "inspection" vs "offsite compliance monitoring" and reporting of these activities under the Cooperative Agreement and the routine incorporation of "virtual" activities as part of inspections/ investigations by several states/ tribes/ territories.

To address these and related issues, in 2022, the AAPCO Board put together a small workgroup including states and EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) to identify and discuss the issues. A survey was developed and distributed in 2023. From the information collected from the survey, in addition to discussions at the 2023 AAPCO Annual Conference and Pre-SFIREG and SFIREG Meetings, plus ongoing Workgroup meetings, the following are identified as focus areas:

1. Including e-Commerce as a Picklist in the next Cooperative Agreement Guidance;
2. Identifying interim reporting (prior to a new Cooperative Agreement Guidance) - how best to report e-Commerce activities for current grant cycle;
3. Developing e-Commerce inspection guidance; and
4. Increasing cooperation and communication routes for co-regulators.

Current participants include:

State Lead Agencies

Pat Farquhar, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Kristen Lashley, Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries

David Huber, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Garret Creason, Office of the Indiana State Chemist

Toby Primbs, Oregon Department of Agriculture

Haley Johnson, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Otto Oemig, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Jacob Addison, Department of Pesticide Regulation Public Service and Agriculture, Clemson University

EPA Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance:

Royan Teter

Michael Bauman

Ricardo Jones

In 2025, the workgroup continues to have interest in #1 & #2. Regarding #1, a proposed e-Commerce picklist item was included in the *draft* FY26-29 Cooperative Agreement Guidance. Members of the workgroup along with others submitted written input into the draft guidance. The workgroup also had two additional follow-up meetings during the Fall of 2024 with EPA to further discuss input regarding the proposed e-Commerce picklist language. There is a continued need for messaging from EPA HQ to all Regions and grantees about the ability to negotiate these as part of their cooperative agreements and encourage them to do so (assuming the grantee is interested in conducting e-Commerce inspections). Central to this is EPA allowing states to use their grant funding to support these activities (i.e.: reduce in person marketplace and add some e-Commerce inspections).

For #3, the workgroup is continuing the process of summarizing existing inspection guidance from those that are currently conducting e-Commerce inspections into a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) guidance to hopefully act as a resource for regulators. Those seeking to conduct e-Commerce activities have indicated that they would like guidance. Ideally, guidance could be developed for use by both EPA and grantees or at least developed in parallel. Work on #3 will continue into 2026.

In addition, along with exploring guidance the workgroup is also looking for ways to increase coordination and communication with those that are conducting, or are interested in starting to conduct, e-commerce activities. Thus, for #4, the group recently created a new Basecamp platform for states to ask questions and collaborate on e-Commerce topics. In addition to the 8 states currently on the workgroup, an additional 7 states have signed up a representative from their state. Thus, the new platform now has 15 states who are able to quickly communicate on e-Commerce related topics.

Respectfully Submitted,
Toby Primbs
Pesticides Program Manager
Oregon Department of Agriculture

AAPCO Endangered Species Act Workgroup Report

2/23/26

Chairpersons: Harris Walters and Kelly Navinsky-Wenzl

The AAPCO Endangered Species Act (ESA) Workgroup has met consistently since its establishment in November 2022. The AAPCO ESA Workgroup was created to monitor ESA-related developments with potential impacts on state pesticide regulatory programs and the grower community. Membership consists of 28 individuals, including 15 representatives from State Lead Agencies (SLAs) and 13 members from industry, tribes, federal agencies, and academia. SLA participation spans nearly all EPA Regions, with Regions 2 and 3 still seeking representation.

In September 2023, the AAPCO ESA Workgroup co-chairs brought forth a proposal for a third SFIREG joint working committee to focus on ESA strategy implementation. This proposal stemmed from the increasing complexity and volume of ESA discussions and the need to allow the POM and EQI committees to focus on non-ESA regulatory matters. The resulting SFIREG ESA Strategy Implementation Working Committee (ESI) became active in July 2024. While some members participate in both groups, their responsibilities differ: the AAPCO ESA Workgroup addresses emerging ESA issues, whereas the ESI Committee focuses on implementing current ESA strategies. Additionally, the AAPCO ESA Workgroup allows representation from non-SLA groups where the ESI Committee is solely SLA membership.

AAPCO ESA Workgroup meeting discussions have been wide-ranging, with topics covering qualified conservation programs and external parties, EPA's Mitigation Menu, EPA's Final Insecticide Strategy, EPA's recent pesticide registrations and how the new ESA process impacted these actions, the proposed removal of "harm" from the definition of "take", Pesticide Use Limitation Areas and the refinement process, and the ESA National Forum on Pesticide Education & Outreach.

AAPCO ESA Workgroup Projects Since Previous Report (Active and Finalized):

ESA National Forum Survey

The AAPCO ESA Workgroup, in collaboration with the ESI Committee, developed and distributed a national survey to assess interest in an ESA implementation workshop/forum. The survey received 82 responses from universities, registrants, regulators, tribal representatives, industry, and NGOs. Ninety-two percent of respondents expressed interest in a national ESA forum, confirming broad support and elevating the event as an AAPCO ESA Workgroup priority.

EPA Qualified Conservation Programs and Experts

The AAPCO ESA Workgroup co-chairs and the AAPCO Board members met with EPA to discuss proposed changes to qualified conservation programs and experts. The meeting clarified EPA's evolving direction and how these programs may integrate with the new ESA requirements. A formal letter summarizing the AAPCO ESA Workgroup concerns and recommendations was submitted to EPA.

AAPCO ESA Workgroup SLA members and the ESI Committee jointly met with EPA to discuss EPA's Information Collection Request for qualifying Conservation Programs and Conservation External Parties. EPA shared its new plan to incorporate qualified conservation programs and experts into the ESA framework and identified information needs that would support the process.

AAPCO ESA Workgroup SLA members and the ESI Committee jointly met with USDA's Office of Pest Management Policy to discuss EPA's Qualifying Conservation Programs and Conservation External Parties. The meeting focused on state preparedness and potential areas of concern associated EPA's proposed changes.

ESA National Forum on Pesticide Education & Outreach

During the September SFIREG Joint Working Committee meeting held in Raleigh, North Carolina, the AAPCO ESA Workgroup co-chairs and members of the ESA National Forum Steering Committee delivered updates to the ESI Committee. The briefing covered current progress on forum planning activities, including the development of proposed agenda items and refinement of the draft invitee list.

The AAPCO ESA Workgroup partnered with the SFIREG ESI Committee and CropLife America to host an ESA National Forum on Pesticide Education & Outreach in Alexandria, Virginia, on February 10–11, 2026. The event brought together 45 participants, including representatives from EPA, USDA, NASDA, FWS, NMFS, SLAs, registrants, university/extension programs, industry, grower groups, and NGOs. The forum's objective was to coordinate the development of effective education and training materials to support ESA-related pesticide application requirements. The AAPCO ESA Workgroup co-chairs served on the steering committee and participated in more than ten planning meetings to coordinate the event. A roadmap and summary document will be released in the coming weeks, and the 2026 Annual AAPCO meeting will include a presentation on key outcomes.

PREP Representation

AAPCO ESA Workgroup members delivered presentations at two PREP courses during the year, highlighting current ESA topics and ongoing AAPCO ESA Workgroup initiatives.

FIFRA Endangered Species Task Force (FESTF) Mitigation Tracker

Cameron Douglass, representing FESTF, delivered a presentation introducing the newly developed Mitigation Tracker. The tool is structured as a spreadsheet that compiles information extracted from decision documents issued by EPA, NMFS, and FWS which are posted on regulations.gov. The Mitigation Tracker is intended to consolidate these materials into a single, accessible reference to support ongoing ESA-related coordination and analysis. The Mitigation Tracker is available on FESTF's website: [FIFRA Endangered Species Task Force - Mitigation Tracker](#)

AAPCO ESA Workgroup Website Updates

The AAPCO ESA Workgroup co-chairs updated the AAPCO ESA website to reflect current ESA developments. Updates included adding new resources, removing outdated or broken links, and revising content for clarity and relevance.

Ongoing Engagement

The AAPCO ESA Workgroup remains committed to expanding opportunities for AAPCO members to engage in regular dialogue with EPA, industry partners, and other agencies involved in ESA-related pesticide program issues. Members with questions or interest in participating may contact the AAPCO ESA Workgroup co-chairs:

- Harris Walters – Harris.Walters@FDACS.Gov
- Kelly Navinsky-Wenzl – Kelly.NavinskyWenzl@KS.GOV

Pesticide Device Workgroup Report - 2025

February 18, 2026

SLA Chair: Jolynn Morris, Colorado

Industry Chair: Kim Nemeth, Procter & Gamble

The Pesticide Device Workgroup is the newest AAPCO workgroup. The workgroup was formed to foster collaboration among state regulators, EPA, and industry partners with the goal of improving transparency, consistency, and clarity in pesticide device regulations. Our mission is to emphasize sharing information, reduce duplication of efforts, and to create actionable guidance for registration, labeling, and enforcement related to pesticide devices for industry and regulators.

General Summary of Workgroup Activities

The workgroup had its first kickoff meeting on October 24, 2025, which hosted over 80 attendees across SLAs and industry. Meeting cadence and organization were discussed, with the understanding that more discussion was needed. Participants expressed an interest in smaller sub-work groups based on device types. There was a consensus in the need for guidance and consistency between states regarding review of efficacy data and enforcement actions. A desire for understanding and developing an acceptable bar for efficacy data and claims was also heavily highlighted in this meeting.

The larger workgroup met again on November 17, 2025. During this meeting, further discussion regarding meeting frequency between SLA and industry was discussed, with a decision that meetings would alternate between the separate stakeholder groups and the larger combined group. It was also determined that trade association help would be needed for industry anti-trust support if we are to focus on antimicrobial and insect products. Following this meeting a member list was developed, and a device registration requirements survey was sent to all SLAs who participated in the first meetings to begin a state-device-registration-requirements guidance document. Industry agreed to start drafting a draft efficacy guidance document within a smaller workgroup.

The first SLA-only call was January 20, 2026, with 12 participants. This call served as an introduction and an overview of the SLA survey results. Future SLA meeting ideas were also brainstormed, including potential collaborative meetings with EPA, to improve communication on common device concerns, and other regulator focused training. While device type subgroups were discussed at the larger meeting, it was determined that the SLA side would like to continue meeting together for all workgroup topics.

The larger group meet again on February 18, 2026, survey results were shared and industry's draft guidance document was reviewed. Well participated discussion followed, with the agreement that there will again be a need to further separate this guidance by device type.

Issues to be raised for discussion by AAPCO Board of General Session

The Device Workgroup has no issues to be raised at this time.

Future Activities for 2026

The separate stakeholders groups will continue to meet separately to provide further feedback and edits to the initial draft efficacy guidelines currently applicable to all device types. A tentative plan is for the larger group to meet towards the end of spring/early summer to review these edits.

As of the date of this report, we are still waiting for a few states to provide information on their current device registration requirements to complete that guidance document. Once that information is available, it will be shared with workgroup members and posted to the AAPCO Device Workgroup webpage.

The next SLA-only call is scheduled for March 17, 2026, at 12 PM EST. Industry is intending to meet monthly. Please contact one of the co-chairs if you would like to be included in these discussions.

Industry: Kim Nemeth - Nemeth.ka@pg.com

SLA: Jolynn Morris - Jolynn.morris@state.co.us

As there has been significant interest and high participation from industry and states, including states who do not register pesticide devices, as co-chair, I would like to thank the AAPCO Board for initiating the development of this workgroup.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jolynn Morris
Colorado Department of Agriculture

American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators (AAPSE)



Liaison Report – March 2026

Amanda Strouse, Delaware Department of Agriculture, Pesticide Certification Trainer/Educator



Who?

- Members come from public and private entities, government, business, and academia

What?

- Enhance public health and the environment through involvement in education, outreach, and research which directly benefits pest managers, policy makers, and the public.



Current Executive Committee

Sherman Takatori – President (2025-2026)

Brett Bultemeier – President-Elect (2025-2026)

Eugene Merkl – Immediate Past-President (2025-2026)

Sonja Thomas – Treasurer (2016-2026)

Stephen Vantassel – Treasurer-Elect (2025-2026)

Frannie Miller – Secretary (2023-2027)

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ARTICLES

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What Guest Trainers Wish Every Host Educator Knew

- Stephen M. Vantassel, Vertebrate Pest Specialist, Montana Department of Agriculture, Lewistown, MT, svantassel@mt.gov
- Beth Thomas, Training and Development Specialist, Montana Department of Agriculture, Helena, MT, beth.thomas@mt.gov

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION – PAGES I-II

You Worked So Hard to Write Those Certification Test Items. How Well Are They Performing?

- Andrew Martin, Assessment Specialist, Office of Indiana State Chemist, West Lafayette, IN, martinag@purdue.edu

EVENTS

Select webinar recordings and handouts available with member login

Conferences

- *Southern Region Meeting in Raleigh, NC June 1-3, 2026
- *National Conference in Green Bay, WI July 27-30, 2026
- *North Central Region Meeting in South Dakota Aug 25-27, 2026

Quarterly Newsletters

- Upcoming events
- News from the membership
- New manuals, new resources, rule changes, etc.



Various Webinars!

- Pollinators & Pesticide Stewardship
- Technician/Operator Training within Structural Pest Control
- Beating Burnout
- ESA Overview



Committees

*various topics like translation of certification materials, development of promotional materials, and more!

AAPCO REPORT TO MEMBERSHIP
NASDA Liaison Report
Kelly Friend, AAPCO President
March 3, 2026

AAPCO has been working cooperatively with our valued partners at NASDA and appreciates their efforts to support programs and policies that impact AAPCO members.

AAPCO values the continued dialogue and contributions from NASDA staff including CEO, Ted McKinney, Senior Director of Public Policy, RJ Karney, and Director of Public Policy, Patrick Wade. This includes participation at the 2025 AAPCO Annual meeting and the full SFIREG meetings in June and December. Patrick provided timely updates as part of all three of these meetings.

A general summary of shared topics of interest for the past year include:

- STAG funding and SFIREG grant funding
- Pesticides and the Endangered Species Act – training and outreach needs and enforcement issues
- Pesticide registration decisions
- USDA Recordkeeping Rule
- NASDA's work related to the Pesticide Inspector Residential Training (PIRT)
- Coordination with USDA's OPMP on ESA guidance

The AAPCO President, President-Elect, and Immediate Past President held routine meetings with NASDA throughout the 2025 and the beginning of 2026. AAPCO appreciates the routine conversations that occur with NASDA revolving around the topics of mutual interest, their attendance at AAPCO and SFIREG meetings, and participation in calls with EPA and AAPCO members.

NASDA has also released their 2026 policy priorities and they include pesticide regulations. A copy of NASDA's Pesticide Regulations information sheet is attached to this report.

AAPCO looks forward to working together with NASDA in the coming year.

PESTICIDE REGULATIONS

A predictable, enforceable, science- and-risk-based pesticide regulatory framework is essential for maintaining agricultural productivity while minimizing adverse impacts on human health, the environment and endangered species. State primacy for pesticide regulatory enforcement is a cornerstone of that framework. NASDA encourages Congress and EPA to provide adequate resources to state lead agencies and strive to meaningfully implement their feedback on pesticide policy initiatives, particularly related to the enforcement of Endangered Species Act mitigation measures on pesticide labels.



Scan to learn more about NASDA's pesticide regulations policy.



BACKGROUND

State Agriculture Departments' Role in Pesticide Regulations



In 43 states and Puerto Rico, the state department of agriculture is a co-regulatory partner with EPA and is responsible for administering, implementing and enforcing the production, labeling, distribution, sale,

use and disposal of pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.

In addition to state-level registrations of pesticides, some key pesticide regulatory implementation activities led by states include:

- 1. Producer Establishment & Marketplace Inspections:** States inspect sites where pesticides are produced, distributed and sold to ensure that the products purchased by users are properly registered and labeled.
- 2. Applicator Certification and Education:** States work with pesticide safety educators to ensure applicators are trained and certified to use pesticides in accordance with the label.
- 3. Compliance Enforcement:** State inspectors conduct both routine and for-cause investigations to ensure pesticides are used according to the label. This is key to protecting applicators, workers and the public, as well as preventing adverse effects on the environment.

Endangered Species Act Workplan

Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, the EPA is required to assess a wide variety of potential human health and environmental effects when considering a pesticide product for registration or re-registration, including impacts on species or critical habitats identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Following years of legal challenges to these efforts, the EPA published its Endangered Species Act Workplan, a systematic approach to bring future pesticide registrations into

PESTICIDE REGULATIONS



compliance with the act. To date, under the workplan, EPA has published a final Herbicide Strategy and final Insecticide Strategy. A draft Fungicide Strategy is expected in 2026, and a final Rodenticide Biological Evaluation and final Vulnerable Species Pilot Project have also been published.

NASDA commends EPA on its significant efforts to refine its original draft Herbicide and Insecticide Strategies into final strategies that offer more flexible measures for growers and pesticide applicators to mitigate the impacts of pesticide runoff and drift on endangered species and critical habitats. As these more flexible mitigation measures are being applied to new pesticide labels, however, state lead agencies need additional clarity on how to standardize certain inspection and documentation processes.

NASDA'S POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

NASDA urges EPA to continue to engage in robust dialogue with state lead agencies to incorporate feedback about the enforceability of key mitigation measures. 2026 will be a critical year for on-the-ground implementation of the Endangered Species Act Workplan. The states' abilities to meaningfully enforce these new provisions are instrumental for minimizing adverse impacts on human health, the environment, endangered species and critical habitats.

NASDA has outlined some of its specific priorities for pesticide regulations in the following public comments and letters submitted in 2025:

- [Comments on the Updated Mitigation Proposal for the Atrazine Interim Registration Review Decision](#)
- [Comments on Varroa Mite Pesticide](#)
- [Letter on Priorities for FY26 to House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies](#)
- [Comments on EPA's Proposed Registrations of Over-the-Top Dicamba Products](#)

Key NASDA Positions on Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act Implementation

- NASDA supports the science-based and comprehensive regulatory framework FIFRA provides to pesticide-related environmental and public health protection.
- NASDA supports state primacy in the enforcement of pesticide activities under FIFRA.
- EPA must recognize states are not stakeholders but are co-regulatory partners under FIFRA and, therefore, must be consulted on any FIFRA regulatory or policy initiatives.
- NASDA calls for appropriate and sustained funding for state lead agencies as co-regulatory partners with EPA under FIFRA.

February 2026

**AAPCO Report to Membership
Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee Liaison Report
Brian Verhougstraete, AAPCO Director
February 23, 2026**

AAPCO continues to represent the interests of state lead agencies on the Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee (PPDC). Brian Verhougstraete served as the AAPCO liaison for the PPDC until his term expired on December 10, 2025.

On October 7, 2025, PPDC members received notification from Ed Messina, Director of EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs, that the charter for the committee had temporarily expired and consistent with federal law, all business associated with the committee must pause. The letter further indicated the Agency was taking the necessary steps to recharter the committee and further information would be provided when it was available. As of the date of this report, no new information regarding the status of the PPDC has been received.

Prior to the expiration of the PPDC's charter, EPA put out a call for PPDC nominations and the AAPCO board of directors submitted a nomination for Otto Oemig as the AAPCO liaison to the PPDC, replacing Verhougstraete. The board plans to renominate Mr. Oemig when the PPDC charter is reestablished.

Meeting Summary:

- Verhougstraete attended the spring PPDC meeting held virtually on June 17, 2025. The full meeting agenda, notes and presentations are available on [EPA's PPDC website](#).
- The PPDC typically meets twice a year (spring and fall) but due to the expiration of the committee's charter, the fall meeting was not held.



TPSA Liaison Report
Rob Hofstetter, MD Dept. of Ag
02/10/2026

The Pesticide Stewardship Alliance (TPSA), founded in 2000, is a non-profit organization of federal, state and local governmental agencies, educational and research institutions, public organizations, private corporations and individuals that are actively involved in different aspects of pesticide stewardship. The goals of TPSA are to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and longevity of various pesticide stewardship efforts. Please visit the [TPSA web site](#) for more information.

TPSA convened its annual conference in Charleston, South Carolina at the historic Francis Marion Hotel, February 3-5, 2026. To kick off the conference participants could register for a tour of the USDA Vegetable Lab. Later that evening at the President's Reception, Tim Drake with Clemson University provided us with a welcome address and a bit of a Holy City history lesson. Charleston has been nicknamed *The Holy City* due to the large number of church steeples that dot the skyline.

After a welcome address by outgoing TPSA president, Nicole Jansen, attendees were provided a Keynote Address from Derek Underwood, South Carolina Department of Agriculture. Derek focused his address on Agribusiness in the State. Following the keynote address participants could choose from two meeting tracks. The two tracks focused on stewardship issues around PFAS, container management, pesticide disposal, insecticide and herbicide stewardship, endangered species and more, including residential pesticide stewardship and the roles poison centers play in protecting people, pets and brands. In addition to the two program tracks, attendees were provided with an EPA update from Liz Vizard, Deputy Office Director for Programs as well as an update from Crop Life America, provided by Becca Haynie, CLA Director of Science Policy and Regulatory Affairs.

As always, one of the highlights of the conference is the annual stewardship awards. This year's winners were:

Program Excellence Award: Ag Container Recycling Council (ACRC)
Program Innovation Award: Iowa State University
Member Contribution Award: Tehane Ali
Presidents Award: Wendy Sue Wheeler, Washington State University
Jack Raney, Waste Options SW

Please join us for our conference next year at The Dana on Mission Bay in San Diego, California. The conference is scheduled for February 2-4, 2027. If you have attended a TPSA conference in the past, you know the value of this conference and the wonderful networking opportunities. We hope to see you in February.

For more information about TPSA please visit: <http://tpsalliance.org>. You will find information about past and current activities including the State Pesticide Disposal Database Map, pesticide application information, mini bulk and IBC container management, the TPSA Adviser Newsletter and more.



ASSOCIATION OF STRUCTURAL PEST CONTROL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

ASPCRO Update – March 2026

ASPCRO



Vision

To be the most responsive and reliable unifying voice of state, territorial, and tribal non-agricultural pest control regulatory officials.

Mission

This organization acts as a premier source of information for structural and non-agricultural pesticide use, compliance, and regulation by:

- ❑ Fostering partnerships with all aspects of pest control industry,
- ❑ Providing and promoting education and solutions to address emerging issues, and
- ❑ Acting as a liaison between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, consumers, and industry partners.



Membership

Board of Directors

- Elected
- 8 Directors
- (5) Officers
- (3) At-Large Members
- 2-year terms

- ❑ Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials
- ❑ Work collaboratively with:
 - ❑ U.S. EPA and other federal agencies
 - ❑ State Extension Services
 - ❑ Academia/Researchers
 - ❑ Industry – NPMA, RISE
 - ❑ Professional Associations & Affiliate Groups including AAPCO/SFIREG; NASDA; AAPSE, TPPC

Board Members



President – John Pitcock (KY)

Vice President – Courtney Frazier (FL)

Secretary – Matt Lopez (CO)

Treasurer – Grant Bishop (WV)

Past-President – Allison Cuellar (TX)

Executive Secretary – Linda Johns (MN)

At-Large Members

Dave Huber (VT)

LeAnna Merritt (GA)

Damardray Willams (OK)

Technical Working Committees



- Public Health
- Inspector Training
- Structural Remediation (IA)
- School IPM
- Label Stewardship
- Structural Fumigation
- Termiticide Label Review
- Termiticide Standards
- Rodenticides
- Building Codes

Not just Termites...

Bed Bugs

Roaches

Rodents

Mosquitoes

Structural Invaders

Work



- Pre-Emption
- Residential Mosquito Applications
- Sulfuryl Fluoride Implementation
 - Proposed Mitigation Measures
 - Clearance Devices
- Rodenticides
- ESA Activities
- Administrative work – website & registration system, bylaws

ASPCRO Inspector Training



- The participants are in their 6th month of webinar sessions
- There are 10 Monthly webinar sessions in total each lasting approximately 60-90 minutes
- In-person training and practical at annual meeting in Colorado Springs, CO at the Antlers Hotel to earn certificate of completion (August 11th, 2026)

Meetings



2026 Mid-Year Meeting – NEXT MONTH!

- ❑ Orlando, FL
 - ❑ Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista at Walt Disney World Resort
 - ❑ April 20-21
 - ❑ ASPCRO Planning Committee to visit various locations 23rd-24th for possible 2027 Host Locations and Pest Tour Sites

Annual Conference – August 10th-14th, 2026

- ❑ Colorado Springs, CO
 - ❑ Antlers Hotel
 - ❑ Committee Meetings – Tuesday
 - ❑ Board Meeting – Tuesday
 - ❑ Inspector Training – Tuesday
 - ❑ Conference/General Sessions – Wednesday-Friday
 - ❑ Pest Tour at Olympic Training Center



Make Plans to join us...



Check Out Our Website For More...



WWW.ASPCRO.ORG