Lawsuit Alleges that Monsanto Influenced the EPA's Classification of Glyphosate

In 2015, the World Health Organization categorized glyphosate as a probable human carcinogen. A new lawsuit, filed on behalf of cancer victims, claims the Environmental Protection Agency had the information to label glyphosate as carcinogenic two years earlier and instead chose to claim glyphosate was "not likely to be carcinogenic to humans."

Marion Copley, now deceased, was a toxicologist at the EPA for 30 years. In 2013, she wrote a letter to Jess Rowland, the chair of the EPA's Cancer Assessment Review Committee (CARC), listing 14 reasons to classify glyphosate as carcinogenic. Copley also alleged that Rowland and other select colleagues changed important reports to benefit companies like Monsanto.

The lawsuit is demanding the release of Jess Rowland's communications with Monsanto during his time on the CARC and his involvement with the release of the EPA's memo declaring glyphosate is "not likely to be carcinogenic to humans."

Something Isn't Adding Up

This is not the first time there have been questions surrounding the EPA and their treatment of glyphosate. A glyphosate risk report that found glyphosate was not likely to be carcinogenic to humans, a direct contrast to the WHO report, was released in 2016 on the EPA website on April 29, only to be taken down four days later. This is not the first time two different groups of scientists (the IARC and CARC) have taken a look at the same problem and come up with conflicting views. But the EPA sent officials to help conduct the IARC study. The discrepancy in results was enough for the

House of Representatives Science Committee to request interviews with four different EPA officials, including Jess Rowland. While it makes sense for the chair of the CARC to be mentioned, the letter from Marion Copley makes the EPA's findings seem more like a dictate from private interests than an independent government report.

Where is Monsanto in All of This?

It goes without saying that Monsanto is deeply invested in keeping glyphosate from being labeled as a health hazard. It's easy to sound like a conspiracy theorist, accusing the EPA of being in Monsanto's back pocket, that EPA scientists collaborated with the scientists who found that glyphosate was a probable carcinogen and then walked it back. Monsanto is now using the EPA's official report to dispute the study that the found that glyphosate was harmful. In that light, Marion Copley's allegations of changing study findings to favor industry are not so outlandish. Until we have a transparent system, we have to trust that government science has our best interests at heart. Do we matter more than Monsanto?

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Sources:

- *Questions About EPA-Monsanto Collusion Raised in Cancer Lawsuits* – Organic Consumer's Association
- *EPA Role in Glyphosate Cancer Decisions Questioned By U.S. Lawmaker* – About Lawsuits
- *Chairman Demands EPA Interviews Over Study that Vanished* – E&E News
- *Glyphosate Investigation* – dtnpf.com