



May 20, 2025

Hon. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Hon. Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Kennedy and Secretary Rollins:

On behalf of the public and private sector members of the Border Trade Alliance (BTA), we write to share our concerns regarding the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission's regulatory approach toward pesticides and how new regulations could disrupt cross-border trade and the United States food supply.

Changes to U.S. pesticide regulations, particularly if enacted without a strong foundation in sound science, will have significant implications not only for domestic growers but also for our international trade partners. For example, if Mexican fresh produce shipments—which make up a large and vital share of the fruits and vegetables consumed in the U.S.—are also required to comply with any new standards, the result could be supply chain disruptions, reduced market access, and unintended economic harm to U.S. importers, retailers, and consumers.

More importantly, a dramatic policy shift untethered from scientific consensus threatens to fundamentally reshape agriculture. Agro-chemicals, including modern pesticides, are among the most highly scrutinized and rigorously tested tools in agriculture. In the case of vegetable pesticides, products often undergo more than a decade—up to 11 years—of FDA and EPA review before they are permitted for commercial use. These products are essential to supporting high crop yields and ensuring a reliable, abundant food supply.

Agro-chemicals contribute to the efficiency and sustainability of modern farming. Without access to these tools, food production would be significantly hampered, resulting in lower yields, higher production costs, increased water usage and, ultimately, higher prices for consumers.

The BTA urges the administration to rely on sound science as the guiding principle when evaluating changes to pesticide regulations. Policy decisions must be informed by established research and expert analysis—not driven by public misperception or political expedience.

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We are reminded of the recent U.S.-Mexico trade dispute over genetically modified (GMO) corn. There, too, societal perceptions untethered from scientific evidence drove policy discussions that risked undermining long-standing trade relations. That issue was ultimately resolved through bilateral engagement and a commitment to science-based standards. We caution against repeating similar mistakes. A shift in U.S. pesticide regulations absent scientific support could once again place our countries at odds, to the detriment of both.

Finally, we are concerned that these types of policy changes are rarely confined to their original intent. Regulatory overreach—particularly when perceived as protectionist or politically motivated—often invites reciprocal actions by our trading partners. In this case, countries like Mexico could respond with their own retaliatory measures, creating a cascade of trade tensions that drive up costs and reduce access to affordable, healthy, fresh produce.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. The Border Trade Alliance stands ready to engage in dialogue and provide stakeholder input that ensures agricultural and trade policies are rooted in evidence, collaboration, and the long-term interests of consumers and producers on both sides of the border.

Sincerely,



Pete Sepulveda, Jr.
Chairman
Border Trade Alliance



Britton Mullen
President
Border Trade Alliance