

Legal Challenge Filed Over Federal Approval of PFAS Pesticide

As Health Canada and ECCC Move to Eliminate PFAS, PMRA Approves Two "Forever Chemical" Pesticides

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA, February 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Health and environmental organizations have filed a [Federal Court application](#) challenging Health Canada's approval of cyclobutrifluram, a fluorinated pesticide classified as a PFAS, for use on food crops in Canada.

The application, filed on Jan. 19, 2026, seeks judicial review of a decision by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) authorizing cyclobutrifluram for use on romaine lettuce and as a soybean seed treatment.

Safe Food Matters is leading the case, joined by co-applicants Friends of the Earth Canada and Prevent Cancer Now.

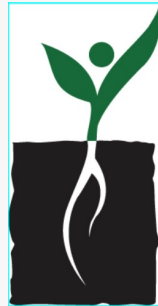
The applicants allege the PMRA acted unreasonably, did not comply with the law, and were biased in their assessment. They say the approval is inconsistent with federal policy and that PMRA failed to properly assess the risks associated with the PFAS chemical, part of a class of substances known to be persistent, toxic and to bioaccumulate.

PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a large group of synthetic chemicals characterized by strong carbon-fluorine bonds that resist degradation. Since they do not readily



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break down, PFAS accumulate in soil, water, plants, wildlife, and people over time. Scientific literature links PFAS exposure to cancer, endocrine disruption, liver toxicity, immune effects, and developmental harms. Cyclobutrifluram degrades to release trifluoroacetate (TFA), a highly persistent PFAS.

The court challenge comes as Health Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) move to eliminate PFAS as a class. In 2025, the departments jointly released the [State of PFAS Report](#), which concludes that PFAS should be phased out using a stepped legislative approach because of their persistence and cumulative risks.

Despite that policy direction, PMRA approved a second PFAS pesticide, isocycloseram, on Jan. 28, 2026. The approval authorizes products containing it for use in Canada. Isocycloseram also releases TFA.

The EPA approved cyclobutrifluram on Nov. 5, 2025 and isocycloseram on Nov. 20, 2025. U.S. environmental groups sued on cyclobutrifuram on Dec. 31, 2025, and on isocycloseram on Jan. 15, 2026.

“Health Canada is approving forever chemicals at the same time it seeks to eliminate them as a class. These two are particularly problematic. We call on Health Canada to suspend the decision and get its house in order.”

— Mary Lou McDonald, President, Safe Food Matters

“There are close to 100 pesticides registered by the PMRA, that all break down to release trifluoroacetate. TFA is on ECCC’s list to be eliminated from use or release, to protect human and environmental health. The Government of Canada cannot tolerate siloing science, with the PMRA enabling what ECCC has stated should be banned.”

— Meg Sears, Chair, Prevent Cancer Now

“Cyclobutrifluram use as a seed treatment for soy could involve prophylactic use for up to 2.9 million acres in Ontario, 1.1 million acres in Quebec, 1.6 million in Manitoba, based on 2025 acreage planted for soy. That could be 5.7 million acres of soy seeds covered in “forever chemicals” just in case nematodes are encountered. It appears that PMRA has not investigated this fungicide for its “forever” impact and yet, PMRA and ECCC have a 2024 Memorandum of Understanding to work together to assess pesticides. ECCC leads Canada’s work to regulate “forever chemicals” and we expect them to halt new uses as a precautionary measure.”

— Beatrice Olivastri, CEO, Friends of the Earth Canada

The applicants are asking the Federal Court to suspend the approval of cyclobutrifluram and return the decision to PMRA for reconsideration, or to set aside the registration.

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