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**Dow Pitching New Pesticide That Doubles as an
Extraordinarily Potent Greenhouse Gas**

*Scientists and Advocates Organizing to Block Sulfuryl Fluoride,
a Pesticide 4,780 Times More Potent than Carbon Dioxide*

SAN FRANCISCO— Public health and environmental advocates Friday asked the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to deny a request from Dow AgroSciences for a permit allowing it to release large amounts of sulfuryl fluoride onto farm fields in four states. The chemical is a toxic pesticide whose global warming effects are thousands of times stronger than carbon dioxide.

“The hazards of using sulfuryl fluoride in agriculture have not been evaluated. It is also 4,780 times as potent a greenhouse gas as carbon dioxide,” said Dr. Brian Hill, a staff scientist at the Pesticide Action Network. “Either one of those facts makes permitting these tests a major mistake.”

Dow AgroSciences proposes using sulfuryl fluoride to sterilize soil in farm fields. The permit would allow the release of 32,435 pounds of sulfuryl fluoride on 65 acres of test plots in Florida, Georgia, Texas, and California. Releasing just 10 percent of that amount into the air would be equivalent to releasing 15.5 million pounds of carbon dioxide. “A car that gets 30 miles per gallon would have to be driven 23 million miles – the distance of a trip circling the world over 930 times – to cause that much global warming,” said Hill.

“Dow would like to sell this toxic chemical to farmers across the country – and will apply to do so if this test goes well,” said Craig Segall of the Sierra Club. “We don’t need more global warming pollution, so we’re asking EPA to nip this problem in the bud.”

“Other offices within EPA are currently working diligently to control climate change, which the EPA recognizes as the most pressing environmental challenge of our times,” said Justin Augustine of the Center for Biological Diversity. “It makes no sense for EPA’s Office of Pesticide Programs to work at cross purposes with the rest of the agency by allowing the use of such a harmful substance.”

Not only is sulfuryl fluoride a potent greenhouse gas, its high toxicity likewise poses significant human health and ecological risks. Thus far, EPA has not carefully reviewed the health risks for those exposed to the chemical or considered the impacts of the releases on endangered species and other wildlife. The groups’ letter asks EPA to take a hard look at these questions, including by consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The letter was signed by Alaska Community Action on Toxics, the Center for Environmental Health, the Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, the Pesticide Action Network, and the Sierra Club.

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