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United States. Congress. House. Committee on Agriculture

E. De la Garza

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news release

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Room 1301, Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

For further information: Bernard Brenner,
Press Secretary, (202) 225-2171

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 1980

WASHINGTON -- The House Tuesday approved a bill (H.R. 7018) which would extend authority for government pesticide control programs for one year, through Sept. 30, 1981.

A similar bill has been approved by the Senate Agriculture Committee and is awaiting Senate floor action.

The House bill was cosponsored by Rep. Kika de la Garza, D-Tex., Vice Chairman of the Agriculture Committee and Chairman of its subcommittee on Department Investigations, Oversight and Research, and by Rep. William C. Wampler, R-Va., Ranking Minority Member of the Agriculture Committee. The bill, which won Committee approval May 15 on a 36-1 vote, was adopted by the House on a 389-22 rollcall.

In addition to extending authority for the federal pesticide control programs which are administered by the Environmental Protection Agency, the bill would add a new directive for the agency. Under H.R. 7018, the EPA would be required to set up formal procedures for "peer review" to provide independent scientific review of the design and results of major scientific studies which are used as the basis for EPA regulatory actions.

The bill also includes an amendment, sponsored on the House floor by de la Garza, giving Congress authority to veto future EPA rules and regulations dealing with pesticides. The veto procedure would work this way:

-- After EPA announces a new regulation, it must lie before Congress for at least 60 days of continuous session before taking effect. If no Congressional committee has adopted a resolution of disapproval within that time and neither House has adopted such a resolution, the rule could take effect after the 60 day period.

-- If during the first 60 days a resolution of disapproval is adopted by either House or by a committee in either House, the rule remains before Congress for an additional 30 days. If both Houses of Congress have not adopted the resolution at the end of the total of 90 days, the regulation could take effect. If both Houses adopt the resolution, the rule would be vetoed.

De la Garza said his subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over pesticide legislation, will continue close oversight of EPA operations to help make sure that pesticide programs are conducted in line with Congressional intent. Wampler said the "peer review" provisions of the bill incorporate recommendations made by the General Accounting Office after a study of EPA's suspension of a weed killer, 2,4,5-T.