Iowa Senate bill insulating pesticide manufacturers from suits over disputed safety labels moves to House

Pesticide manufacturers would be protected from lawsuits stemming from their products’ labeling under a bill advancing through the Iowa Legislature.

Legislation approved by the Senate [April 2] and under consideration in the House would permit a pesticide label to have “sufficient warning” so long as it is complies with federal regulations.

The bill, backed by Bayer, aims to protect the company and others like it from lawsuits accusing their products of not adequately warning of potential health issues, including cancer.

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The Senate version of the measure, Senate File 2412, passed on a 30-19 vote. Four Republicans joined Democrats in opposition.

“All we’re saying is you can’t be sued for following the law, so you may sell your product in our country,” said Senate President Amy Sinclar, R-Allerton. “It’s that. It’s not anything beyond that.”

And Sen. Jeff Edler, R-State Center, said the slew of lawsuits had driven up costs of their products for farmers.

“These companies are being sued for billions of dollars based on an issue, a label, they have zero control over,” Edler said.

Democrats slammed the legislation as a defense of corporate greed, accusing Republicans of prioritizing agribusiness companies over constituents.

“This, in my view, is an anti-Iowa bill,” said Sen. Janice Weiner, D-Iowa City. “It's an anti-farmer bill. It's arguably a pro-cancer bill.”

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