

Amazon agrees to pay \$2.5M to settle pesticide sales lawsuit

November 23 2021, by Levi Pulkkinen, The Seattle Times



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Amazon has agreed to pay \$2.5 million to settle a lawsuit brought by the

Washington state Attorney General's Office claiming the company allowed industrial-grade pesticides to be sold illegally through its online marketplace.

The [pesticides](#) at issue were highly regulated, and in some cases, not available for sale to the general public. Under [state law](#), sellers must hold licenses to sell them and record information about the buyers at the time of sale. For the most dangerous pesticides, the buyer must also be licensed as a pesticide applicator.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has repeatedly investigated pesticide sales on Amazon, garnering a \$1.2 million settlement in 2018.

Amazon facilitated thousands of sales involving the high-strength pesticides between 2013 and 2020, when the company suspended all restricted pesticide sales, attorneys for the state claimed. Amazon failed to inform customers that the agricultural and industrial-use pesticides were different from broadly available products, creating an impression that anyone could buy and use them, the state contended.

"Amazon is a powerful corporation—but it's not above the law," Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson said in a statement.

Some of the pesticides sold on Amazon, if used improperly, can cause neurological damage in humans, contaminate groundwater and harm threatened and endangered species, including Chinook salmon and orcas. A company spokesperson noted that no allegations have been made of harm to customers or the environment.

In addition to paying \$2.5 million, Amazon is required to obtain a license if it restarts sales of those pesticides and to make a host of reforms meant to block unlawful pesticide sales. Amazon agreed to let state investigators review its records to ensure the settlement terms are

being met.

By email, a [company](#) spokesperson said Amazon "will continue to partner with the Attorney General's Office and other relevant agencies to remain in compliance" going forward. Amazon did not admit any wrongdoing.

The agreement reached Monday will be reviewed by a King County Superior Court judge in coming days. Washington residents who may have unintentionally purchased restricted pesticides should contact Amazon.

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Citation: Amazon agrees to pay \$2.5M to settle pesticide sales lawsuit (2021, November 23) retrieved 9 April 2024 from

<https://techxplore.com/news/2021-11-amazon-25m-pesticide-sales-lawsuit.html>

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