

# EPA approves herbicides to control aquatic pest plants

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A decision-making Committee of the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has approved, with specific additional controls, an application to allow a number of herbicides to be used to control aquatic pest plants.

The application by the Agricultural Reassessment Group (ARG) was made on behalf of 12 regional councils, as well as the Department of Conservation, Ministry for Primary Industries, Land Information New Zealand and Mighty River Power. The application related to herbicides containing one of four active ingredients: haloxyfop-R-methyl; imazapyr isopropylamine; metsulfuron-methyl; or triclopyr triethylamine. These herbicides are approved for use on land in New Zealand and are used by the applicant group to control a range of pest plant species. Many pest plants also inhabit aquatic environments. The ARG sought approval for the application of these substances onto or into water for the control of aquatic pest plants.

Twenty-eight submissions were received on the application, with eight submitters requesting to be heard. A hearing was held before the Committee in Hamilton on 31 October.

After weighing the evidence of all submitters, the Committee decided that agrichemical control, using the substances in the application, was more likely to achieve the benefits of controlling aquatic pest plants than other means of controlling them, and concluded there would be significant benefits to New Zealand from the application of these substances onto or into water, subject to controls.

The Committee noted in its decision that the information provided included a number of data gaps, meaning EPA staff were unable to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the impacts of the application of these substances onto or into water. The Committee therefore considered additional controls were necessary to manage potential risks to human health, the environment and the relationship between Maori and the environment, and the uncertainty associated with the effects of the application of the substances onto or into water.

Source EPA