U.S. EPA Releases List of Disinfectants Approved for Use Against COVID-19

Friday, March 6, 2020

On March 3, 2020, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) finalized a list of federally registered disinfectant products that are approved for use against SARS-CoV-2, which is also known as the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. Registration and oversight of disinfectant products falls under U.S. EPA's authority pursuant to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

In 2016, U.S. EPA developed an Emerging Viral Pathogen (EVP) program that provides a process for companies to obtain pre-approval for disinfectants to address emerging viral pathogens in advance of an outbreak. Under the EVP program, manufacturers of registered products can provide the agency with data demonstrating that a registered product is effective against stronger, and harder-to-kill, viruses than SARS-CoV-2. Upon obtaining the agency's approval, a party may then make certain claims in marketing materials about the product's effectiveness against the emerging viral pathogen.

The March 3, 2020 list is of products that have gone through this process and which are approved to make claims that they are effective against SARS-CoV-2. U.S. EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler has advised that “[u]sing the correct disinfectant is
an important part of preventing and reducing the spread of illnesses along with other critical aspects such as hand washing.” We note that U.S. EPA’s authority does not extend to hand sanitizer products or other medical devices, which fall under the Food and Drug Administration’s jurisdiction.

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