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The White House has decided to push for changes in pesticide law that are designed to speed the removal of harmful chemicals from the nation's food supply.

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The proposed changes, which are scheduled to be announced today, would apply to pesticides and other substances found on fresh and processed foods, according to federal officials.

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Environmental groups have been calling for faster action on dangerous pesticides and may welcome part of the proposal.

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"It's a tremendous disappointment," said Janet Hathaway, an attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

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"Allowing the EPA to condone continued use of a chemical whenever the benefits outweigh the risks is absolutely anathema to the environmental community."

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The Bush administration plans to announce a series of principles and to work with congressional leaders in writing specific legislative proposals that embody them.

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The principles would give the Environmental Protection Agency increased authority and flexibility in regulating pesticides, with the aim of enabling the agency to move more quickly.

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There already are proposals pending in Congress to overhaul pesticide law.

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The agency has since acted to remove Alar from the nation's grocery shelves by May 31, 1991, and the apple industry has said that growers already have stopped using the chemical.

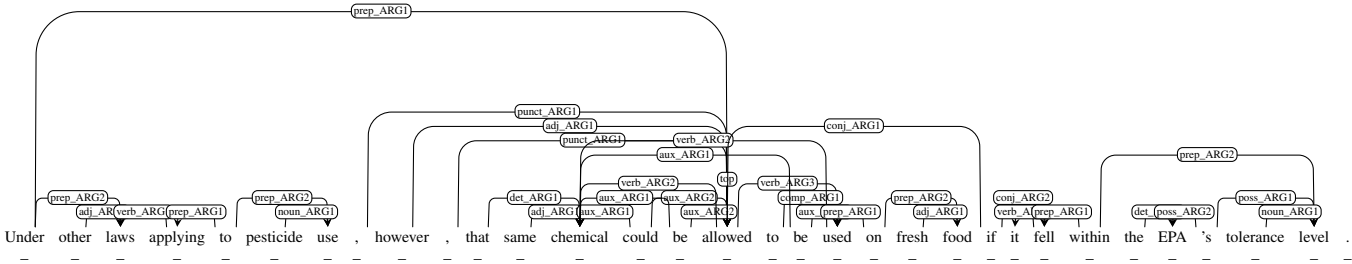
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In addition, the principles attempt to eliminate the so-called Delaney Paradox.

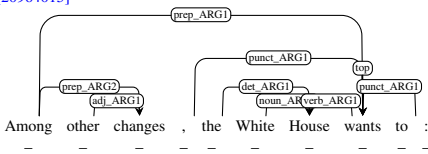
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Under the Delaney clause, which applies to processed food, a chemical is banned if it causes cancer in laboratory animals.

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