



April 22, 2021

Dear Members of the Arkansas Plant Board,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Arkansas Audubon Society, a statewide organization committed to fostering a greater knowledge of the natural history of Arkansas and promoting conservation of natural resources in Arkansas. **We are firmly opposed to lifting the current state-level restrictions on using dicamba.**

When the Arkansas Plant Board originally banned the use of dicamba between April and October, the Board showed solid decision making aimed at protecting the lands and livelihoods of farmers who do not have dicamba-resistant crops. In addition, this decision also benefitted ecosystems beyond agricultural areas. As has been documented in our state and elsewhere, dicamba can damage small herbaceous plants and large woody trees, which are essential to providing food and shelter for wildlife. Arkansas is rich in natural areas that currently support populations of birds, insect pollinators, and other animals that are key components to maintaining the natural integrity and beauty that make our home the Natural State. Use of dicamba during times of the year when these animals are mating and raising their young is no doubt detrimental to sustaining their populations. In a time when studies show alarming declines in monarch butterflies and migratory birds, it is our responsibility to protect the resources they rely upon.

In more recent years, these wise restrictions on the use of dicamba have been chipped away. First, there was the move to make May 25th (instead of April 15th) the cut-off date for spraying dicamba. Now, the Board has *just barely* voted to undo all the state-level restrictions put in place since 2017 so that dicamba can be sprayed well into June and July when scientific evidence tells us this compound will volatilize and spread to the crops of neighbors and the ecosystems beyond.

My favorite conservation writer, Aldo Leopold, said "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community." The right thing to do here is to maintain the current timing of the ban on dicamba. We hope the Arkansas State Plant Board will do the right thing to protect Arkansans, our wildlife, and our landscapes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. R. McClung".

Maureen R. McClung, Ph.D.
Conservation Chair
Arkansas Audubon Society