



Office of Congressional and Public Affairs

Springfield, VA 22152

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley:

This responds to your request for the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) views on S.545 - Combating Illicit Xylazine Act, which is scheduled for a Committee vote on March 19, 2026. The DEA strongly supports the *Combating Illicit Xylazine Act* (S. 545) as written.

Xylazine is a significant public health threat due to its ongoing presence in the illicit drug supply. According to a recent report issued by the CDC¹, xylazine was involved in 6,096 drug poisoning deaths in 2023, making it the fourth most common substance in drug poisoning fatalities. When xylazine is combined with fentanyl it amplifies the deadly effects of fentanyl. DEA labs analyses have shown that xylazine has been present in over 25% of fentanyl powder exhibits and over 8% of pill exhibits in 2025. However, xylazine also has legitimate uses as an animal tranquilizer and is an essential sedative relied upon by veterinarians, farmers, and ranchers, with no cost-effective alternative available.

The *Combating Illicit Xylazine Act* provides the tools necessary to address this ongoing threat while, importantly, safeguarding its essential use in veterinary medicine by ensuring continued critical access of xylazine to veterinarians, farmers, ranchers, and wildlife personnel. As a Schedule III substance under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), xylazine would become part of the closed system of distribution, enabling DEA to track its movement through the supply chain via ARCOS reporting. This tracking allows DEA to identify and address potential points of diversion in the legitimate supply chain, which is essential because DEA has identified specific markers from repurposed veterinary preparations of xylazine that was mixed with fentanyl. Additionally, this legislation would empower federal law enforcement to target online marketplaces and criminal networks trafficking the substance.

Due to xylazine's unique usage, administrative scheduling is not a viable solution to this urgent crisis. The term "ultimate user," as defined by the CSA, only permits a person to possess a controlled substance for an animal owned by themselves or by a member of their household.² This is often not the case for veterinarians, ranchers, farmers and wildlife personnel. DEA is unable to address this problem or redefine the term "ultimate user" through the administrative scheduling process. Thus, a legislative solution is the only way to address the threat of xylazine by placing it

¹ Garnett MF, Cisewski JA, Ahmad FB. Drugs most frequently involved in drug overdose deaths: United States, 2017–2023. *Natl Vital Stat Rep.* 2026 Mar;75(1):1–13. DOI: [https:// dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc/174640](https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc/174640).

² 21 U.S.C. §802(27).

on Schedule III, while ensuring that veterinarians, farmers, ranchers, and wildlife personnel can continue to use xylazine for its legitimate purpose.

DEA appreciates your leadership and support in cosponsoring S. 545, the *Combating Illicit Xylazine Act*. This legislation is a balanced and necessary approach to combat the xylazine crisis, save lives, and protect communities while ensuring veterinarians and other professionals can continue to use xylazine for its intended purpose.

We hope you find this information useful.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Miller

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