



NEWS ADVISORY

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Media Contact:

Paul Schramski, Pesticide Watch (916) 216.1082

Nan Wishner, Chair IPM Task Force Albany (510) 524.5185

Roy Upton, Citizens for Health (831) 461.6317

TOWN HALL MEETING ON AERIAL PESTICIDE SPRAYING OF THE EAST BAY

Scientists, local politicians, and activists hold informational panel as concern rises over State's aerial spray program

Berkeley – On Sunday, February 24, scientists, local politicians, and citizen activists from Monterey, Santa Cruz, and the San Francisco Bay Area will hold an informational meeting on the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) aerial spray campaign for the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM).

The State's announcement that aerial spraying will begin in the San Francisco Bay Area August 1 has sparked strong public concern. CDFA plans to spray the Bay Area and other counties monthly for 3 - 5 years or indefinitely until the moth is eradicated. Each round of spraying involves multiple sorties of airplanes dispersing a synthetic pheromone and a variety of other chemicals encased in microscopic plastic capsules. The spray is classified as a pesticide by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Opponents of the eradication campaign blast CDFA's undertaking of the \$75 million spray campaign despite more than 640 reported health complaints after aerial spraying in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties in 2007, the lack of long-term human toxicity testing of the chemicals being used and absence of any study of the risks of aerial application, CDFA's own admission that LBAM has not caused crop damage in California, and biologists' expert testimony that eradication is impossible.

"The apple moth aerial spray issue is simple. The State sprayed an untested chemical in Monterey and Santa Cruz, and people got sick. Now the State wants to spray the Bay Area. The state spray program is a large-scale, reckless experiment, and we and our environment are the subjects," says Robert Lieber, Mayor of the City of Albany, who is a registered nurse and one of the speakers at the Berkeley event.

"It makes no sense that the State is spraying populated areas as a first resort, despite the availability of effective controls that are safe for human and environmental health," says Nan Wishner, chair of the City of Albany Integrated Pest Management Task Force. Least-toxic controls available for the moth include natural predators and parasites and pheromone-baited sticky traps.

Dr. Daniel Harder, Director of the University of California, Santa Cruz Arboretum, says the moth is considered a minor pest in New Zealand where it was introduced more than 100 years ago, and reports that he has not seen any damage done by the arboretum's extensive Australia and New Zealand plant collection despite the garden's location in the epicenter of the state's moth infestation in Santa Cruz County.

The Sierra Club and several other bodies, including the cities of Albany and Santa Cruz, have passed resolutions opposing aerial pesticide spraying for the light brown apple moth and advocating least-toxic pest controls. A coalition of 17 environmental groups, including Breast Cancer Action, the Breast Cancer Fund, and the Planning and Conservation League Foundation, has taken a stand opposing the spray.

The quickly growing movement in opposition to the aerial spray campaign calls for safe alternatives and demands that public and environmental health take priority over speculative economic loss.

WHEN: Sunday, February 24, 5 - 7 p.m.

WHERE : The Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar Street, Berkeley, CA (between Spruce St. and Arch St. on Cedar St.). Wheelchair accessible.

WHO: Moderator

Paulina Borsook, California Alliance to Stop the Spray (CASS)

Panelists

Mike Lynberg, Helping Our Peninsula's Environment (HOPE)

Roy Upton, California Alliance to Stop the Spray (CASS)

Dr. Daniel Harder, Director UC- Santa Cruz Arboretum

Paul Schramski, State Director, Pesticide Watch Education Fund

Nan Wishner, Chair, Integrated Pest Management Task Force, City of Albany

Robert Lieber, Mayor, City of Albany

John Russo, Executive Director, StopTheSpray.org

SPONSORED BY:

- Pesticide Watch (www.pesticidewatch.org)

Dedicated to fighting dangerous pesticide use in California communities.

- Citizens for Health (www.citizens.org/)

A national citizens rights organization dedicated to freedom of choice in health care decisions.

- California Alliance to Stop the Spray: CASS (www.lbamspray.com)

An alliance of individuals and non-profits founded in the Monterey Bay area.

- StopTheSpray.ORG (www.StopTheSpray.org)

Unites the voices of people opposed to aerial spray.

Other upcoming informational meetings sponsored by Pesticide Watch:

MARIN: Mar. 3, 7PM Corte Madera Town Center, Ste. 201

EL SOBRANTE: Apr. 7, 7PM, E. Bay Waldorf School, 3800 Clark

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Pesticide Watch Education Fund is a statewide public health and environmental group that works side-by-side with communities to clean up pesticide pollution and prevent pesticide exposure.