



## For Immediate Release

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### **State Politicians Take Action to Stop Aerial Pesticide Spraying**

#### *Citizen Groups and Local Politicians React to Legislation Tackling Aerial Pesticide Spraying for the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM)*

**Sacramento** - Citizen groups and local politicians who oppose the California Department of Agriculture (CDFA) aerial spray program for the light brown apple moth (LBAM) are elated about five bills introduced by state assemblymembers on Friday to address serious shortcomings of the CDFA eradication program. In addition, Monterey Assemblymember Laird announced that the legislators will introduce an Assembly resolution next week opposing LBAM aerial spraying. Bay Area Senator Carole Migden announced earlier last week that she will introduce a similar resolution in the State Senate.

“Politicians are listening to the health and environmental concerns of Californians when our state agencies won’t,” said Paul Schramski, Director of statewide public health and environmental group Pesticide Watch. “It’s time Agriculture Secretary Kawamura gave up his keys and let the people of California and their elected officials drive.”

The growing opposition movement, composed of environmental, public health, and civil rights groups, voiced support for legislators that have stepped forward on the issue. The four bills introduced by Assemblymembers Laird (D-Monterey), Leno (D-San Francisco), Huffman (D-San Rafael), and Hancock (D-El Cerrito) propose modifications to existing law to ensure advance planning for addressing invasive species, environmental review of aerial spraying over urban areas, notification and full disclosure of pesticide ingredients, and a requirement that the Governor must declare a state of emergency before pesticides can be applied in urban areas as part of an eradication project. The fifth bill, authored by Oakland Assemblymember Sandré Swanson, requires a 2/3 majority vote of consent by residents who would be affected by aerial spraying. Together, these bills require informed consent of residents as the prerequisite for an aerial spray program.

“All together, this package of five bills takes a giant step forward to protect the public health of Californians by ensuring informed consent for any state aerial pesticide spray,” said Albany Mayor Robert Lieber, a registered nurse and the first Bay Area Mayor to speak out against the LBAM aerial spray last month. “It is critical that the legislature pass these five bills as a package

so that we will not ever again be subjected to a campaign of deception to sell the apple moth spray to the people.”

Spray opposition groups say they are planning to work with the legislators to ensure that the bills pass as a package and provide tough protection for the health and welfare of the public as well as farmers and farm workers, making the state of California a leader in informed consent related to pesticide use.

"The process used by the CDFA in its LBAM experiment has turned the democratic process upside down." Says city council member Jeff Haferman of Monterey, the first community to be sprayed last fall. "However, these bills are a good first step towards once again giving we the people the right to have control over the air we breathe.”

While four of the five bills provide information and greater public participation in proposed aerial spray plans, one bill singles out the need for direct public involvement. "Assemblymember Swanson's bill is delivering on the call for consent by the 9,000 signers of the petition." Said John Russo, Executive Director of StopTheSpray.ORG."The other four bills ensure that the people have the information necessary to make good decisions." Russo authored an online petition that calls for public consent before aerial pesticides spraying. The petition has received a surge of signatures and comments during the past few weeks since CDFA announced that LBAM aerial spraying will start in August in the San Francisco Bay Area.

On Sunday afternoon, more than two hundred residents gathered for a town hall meeting in the Berkeley Hillside Club determined to halt the ill-received campaign before it hits the Bay Area. Speakers addressed the health, environmental, pest biology, integrated pest management, political, and legislative aspects of the spray issue. Botanist and University of Santa Cruz Arboretum Director Dr. Daniel Harder, who was one of the presenters at the meeting, noted that "There has been no reported, quantifiable damage done to any plant by the LBAM in California. Other areas of the globe, such as New Zealand and Hawaii consider LBAM a minor pest. In New Zealand, the only real threat LBAM presents is the imposition caused by U.S. export regulations.”

While the opposition is in agreement that the public meetings that have been held by CDFA on the LBAM spray have not allowed for meaningful public participation and that the authority to declare pest emergencies should not just rest with administrative officials who are not directly responsible to the electorate, the groups are also calling for an independent review of health and environmental risks in addition to the completion of the Environmental Impact Report before continuation of the LBAM program.

"We need a thorough peer-reviewed study of the 643 illness complaints received so far, some of which were very serious and required hospitalization." Said Mike Lynberg, a citizen of Pacific Grove who authored a report on adverse reactions to the spray in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. Lynberg continued, "The California Constitution says that citizens have a right to safety. How can the Governor not do everything possible to ensure people's safety before the CDFA's reckless campaign moves to the San Francisco area and more people are possibly injured and made sick?"

So far, the State is not investigating hundreds of health complaints that were received after the aerial spraying in the Monterey Bay and Santa Cruz areas last year, and the Department of Fish and Game has stopped investigating the death of hundreds of waterfowl that took place right after spray application.

Aerial spray opponents intend to present their concerns to the Oakland City Council, Berkeley City Council and CDFA EIR Scoping officials on Tuesday night.

The petition against the aerial spraying, as well as information on upcoming events can be accessed at [www.stopthespray.org](http://www.stopthespray.org).

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