



For Immediate Release

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RICHMOND JOINS CRITICAL MASS OF BAY AREA CITIES OPPOSING THE AERIAL SPRAY PROGRAM

*Richmond City Council Unanimously Passes Resolution Against Aerial Pesticide
Spraying for the Light Brown Apple Moth*

Richmond, CA –The Richmond City Council is unified in their strong opposition to the aerial pesticide spraying for the light brown apple moth. Last night after listening to numerous concerns of residents packed into the council chamber, the City Council of Richmond joined over a dozen of cities and counties opposing aerial pesticide spraying by unanimously passing a resolution opposing aerial pesticide spraying for the light brown apple moth (LBAM). For a video of the event, please visit: <http://www.ci.alameda.ca.us/webcast/moreinfo.html>.

“Cities are standing up for Californians’ concerns in the face of pressure from the California Department of Food and Agriculture to spray unproven pesticides,” said Paul Schramski, State Director of Pesticide Watch. “It’s time for State officials to seriously reevaluate their eradication program in light of overwhelming opposition.”

The resolution calls for a moratorium of the eradication program run by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and for a long-term study of 643 health reports that were collected after aerial spraying in the Monterey Bay Area last fall.

Speaking before the Council, East-Bay resident Lisa Tracy warned that Richmond already carries a high burden of toxins in the environment. “Based on the reports from Santa Cruz where several children experienced first-time asthma attacks after the spraying, I fear for an area that already has such high amounts of particulate matter in the air and where incidents of childhood asthma are soaring.” Tracy said.

Earlier this year, a coalition of environmental groups released a report citing 643 documented cases of adverse health effects. Those who complained of adverse reactions said the spray caused symptoms ranging from asthma-like attacks and difficulty breathing, to chest pains, headaches, blurred vision, swollen glands, skins rashes and feelings of chronic fatigue. Neither the CDFA, nor the California Department of Public Health, have fully investigated these claims to-date.

Large-scale pesticide spraying took place in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties as part of CDFA efforts to eradicate the light brown apple moth, a species the State says is a threat to

agriculture. Each round involved multiple sorties of airplanes dispersing a chemical cocktail called Checkmate encased in microscopic plastic capsules. Much of the spraying took place over densely populated areas and resulted in hundreds of health complaints and environmental damage due to drift and rain run-off into the Monterey Bay.

Ingredients of the pesticide spray that was used last fall include known carcinogens. No long-term human toxicity studies have been conducted of the pesticides being used. In addition the minute size of the plastic capsules in which the pesticide is sprayed, may pose inhalation risks.

Based on up-to-date science the Richmond resolution requests down-grading of the current classification of LBAM as a quarantinable pest, and asks CDFA to shift to least-toxic pest control methods that do not expose populated areas to aerial spraying.

The resolution states the council's support for passage of legislation requiring explicit consent of affected residents before any aerial spray, as well as four other bills and two related resolutions dealing with issues such as disclosure of pesticide ingredients, notification and due process of residents and calling for a moratorium of the spray program.

Says Nan Wishner, Chair of the Integrated Pest management Task Force Albany and Coordinator of Stop the Spray East Bay: "We are especially delighted to see the City of Richmond support the Aerial Spray Inform and Consent Act by Oakland Assemblymember Sandré Swanson which creates substantive change in the way aerial spray programs are conducted by requiring informed consent of voters."

"Californians deserve to make informed decisions about pesticides being sprayed over their communities," adds Paul Schramski.

The Aerial Spray Inform and Consent Act will be first heard on April 8, in the California Assembly Committee on Elections and Redistricting.

The resolution follows similar resolutions passed already by the cities of Albany, Berkeley, Corte Madera, Emeryville, Fairfax, Mill Valley, Monterey, Oakland, Pacific Grove, San Anselmo, San Leandro, Santa Cruz, Sausalito, and by the counties of Santa Cruz and Marin.

Also yesterday night, in an equally packed council chamber, CDFA faced tough questions and criticism from Alameda council members and residents during a presentation of plans to spray the city of Alameda starting August 1st.

When asked whether farm workers would be allowed to remain in the field while their farms were to be aerial sprayed with Checkmate, CDFA Secretary Kawamura answered, "No." <http://www.ci.alameda.ca.us/webcast/moreinfo.html> (1.48.50).

Councilmember Maxine Gilmore said, "The difference is a farm worker can sue you [the CDFA]. A person walking or playing outside can not do anything about it."

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