

April 28, 2008

Being Presented to San Francisco Board of Supervisors for Resolution

Position Paper: Opposition to Aerial Spraying of Pesticides Pheromones for Light Brown Apple Moth

San Francisco, California is scheduled for aerial spraying for the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) in August 2008. Bayview Hunters Point Health and Environmental Resource Center (HERC) voices opposition to aerial spraying for the LBAM based on extensive research around its effectiveness and its adverse impact on people with upper respiratory conditions. Of primary concern is the high rate of asthma in Bayview Hunters Point.

According to complaints of adverse reactions to aerial spraying in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties (Lynberg and Dilworth, 2008), citizens' complaints included but were not limited to:

- Asthma attacks
- An inability to concentrate and focus
- Bronchial irritation
- Dizziness
- Lung congestion and soreness
- Muscle aches
- Difficulty breathing and shortness of breath
- Body tremors
- Coughing or wheezing
- Intestinal pain and diarrhea
- Skin rashes (sometimes severe)
- Nausea
- Vision blurred
- Swollen glands and lymph nodes in neck and under arms
- Eye irritation
- Feelings of lethargy and malaise
- Sore throats
- Menstrual cramping, and interruption to menstrual cycles, and in some cases a recommencement of menstrual cycles after menopause
- Nasal congestion
- Headaches (sometimes debilitating)
- Heart arrhythmia and tachycardia (irregular and rapid heartbeat)
- Chest pains and tightness

Lynberg and Dilworth wrote that 643 documented complaints were received and believed to be short-term reactions following aerial spraying of pheromones during the months of September and October 2007. The report indicates that there may have been some underreporting because of a lack of time faced by potential complainants or their unwillingness to consult a doctor because of the expense.

HERC is extremely concerned about the large scale of documented complaints despite California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) assurances that the spray would be safe. Within the Bayview Hunters Point community, approximately 17-20 percent of the population already suffers with asthma or asthma-like symptoms. Imagine what an aerial spray of pheromones over the city will do to individuals suffering from upper respiratory conditions! Is the City and County of San Francisco ready to handle health-related chaos that will affect the sick as well as healthy individuals who will become sick?

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors must demand that CDFA answer the following questions: Is the LBAM harmful to people? Will aerial spraying of pheromones conclusively eliminate the LBAM? Are there other options for controlling the LBAM that are more environmentally friendly? Since San Francisco is highly urbanized and mostly paved over, why is it necessary for it to be included in aerial spraying? How will the spraying of neighboring counties (those that have already been sprayed) impact cities not yet sprayed?

HERC urges local and state governments to act cooperatively to intervene and protect San Francisco from a scheduled spraying in August. HERC further requests that the CDFA provide proof of its safety guidelines to citizens as soon as possible. I am very concerned about the unnecessary cost the city will incur as a result of an operation that may be ineffective and not well researched by the government regarding its aftermath.

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