



November 7, 2023

Karen Morrison, Chief Deputy Director
California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR)
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95812-4015
DPR Public Comment Portal:
<https://cdpr.commentinput.com/?id=693bMd8pu>

Subject: Comments on DPR's Draft Strategic Plan 2024-2028

Dear Karen Morrison:

On behalf of the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA), we thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the California Department of Pesticide Regulation's (DPR's) [Draft Strategic Plan 2024-2028](#). BACWA is a joint powers agency whose members own and operate publicly-owned treatment works and sanitary sewer systems that collectively provide sanitary services to over seven million people in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. Every day, BACWA members provide wastewater treatment for millions of gallons of pesticide-containing wastewater that is discharged to fresh or saltwater bodies, including local creeks and rivers, bays, and the Pacific Ocean. We take our responsibilities for safeguarding receiving waters seriously.

BACWA strongly supports the implementation of DPR's draft Strategic Plan 2024-2028. BACWA appreciates that DPR is moving forward quickly with specific goals outlined in this Strategic Plan to implement SPM in California.

- **BACWA supports DPR's move towards greater engagement and collaboration, especially with urban stakeholders.** We support the proposed advisory committee and encourage DPR to include urban stakeholders on this committee (Goal 1.1) We encourage DPR to structure the committee with a fair balance between agricultural representation and urban representation. We greatly appreciate Goal 2.1: *Enhance and modernize DPR's collection of information and data to improve program policies, procedures, and priorities*. This goal will expand DPR's pesticide use data collection and trend analysis to incorporate urban areas, allowing greater urban engagement and collaboration.
- **BACWA appreciates DPR's move towards greater transparency through the Strategic Plan.** We have witnessed a gradual increase in transparency at DPR since the 1990s and are encouraged that DPR included transparency as a Core Value in the Strategic Plan. We support the expansion of transparency through the development of a

SPM Certification program (Goal 1.1) and the issuance of timeline projections for scientific data evaluations (Goal 1.2). We support increased outreach to local urban communities (Goal 3), beyond the existing outreach that is focused on County Agricultural Commissioners. We are excited about DPR's plans to streamline submission of public comments, add new data visualization tools, and expand language access.

- **BACWA supports DPR's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**, especially the goal to increase access to information and data collection. Many of the least-expensive, most widely available indoor pesticides are some of the most toxic to humans and the environment. These pesticides also have a down-the-drain pathway that also affects aquatic life (e.g. cypermethrin indoor foggers). DPR's goal for greater access to information and data collection in the areas of pesticides that particularly affect low-income households and aquatic life is very important. Pesticides outreach to disadvantaged communities should be done through local partners and governmental agencies, not just through County Agricultural Commissioners.
- **BACWA suggests that DPR focus on categories of pesticides by use, rather than individual pesticides.** In developing and implementing a prioritization process for high-risk pesticides (Goal 1.3), BACWA recommends that DPR evaluate pesticides based on pest control problem (e.g., indoor roaches) rather than by active ingredient. As stated in DPR's Sustainable Pest Management Roadmap¹ (Goal 1.A.i, p. 32):

“The primary focus for this process and the associated advisory committee would be to advise DPR on prioritization of pesticide products, active ingredients, and groups of related products within the context of specific product uses or pest/location use combination, and on the development of action plans for each priority.”

Prioritizing pesticides by groups of related products is especially important in the urban context where consumers consider products based on use (“What will take care of my flea problem?”) versus active ingredient. BACWA is concerned that the current wording of Goal 1.3 implies a siloed analysis focused on active ingredient, not on product uses or pest/location use combination.

Indoor pet flea control is an important example of where the grouped analysis is important. Monitoring projects conducted by DPR's Surface Water Protection Program have concluded that at least three classes of pet flea control active ingredients with high aquatic toxicity (fipronil, neonicotinoids, and pyrethroids) have a down-the-drain route to wastewater treatment plants, pass through wastewater treatment, and appear in effluent at concentrations above aquatic toxicity thresholds. These pesticides pose threats to NPDES permit compliance, TMDL compliance, and the feasibility of potable reuse using wastewater effluent. BACWA is a proud advocate for holistic solutions to urban pest problems such as

¹ *Accelerating Sustainable Pest Management: A Roadmap for California*. January 2023. Prepared by the Sustainable Pest Management Work Group and the CA Department of Pesticide Regulation, CA Environmental Protection Agency, and CA Department of Food and Agriculture. Available online at https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/sustainable_pest_management_roadmap/spm_roadmap.pdf. Accessed September 27, 2023.

pet flea control. Pet flea control is an excellent example of a pest control challenge that would greatly benefit from development of an "Action Plan" as outlined on pp. 32-33 of the Roadmap. We encourage DPR to move forward with a group-based analysis for pesticide prioritization.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. If you have any questions, please contact BACWA's Project Managers:

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Respectfully Submitted,



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