

Stephen Gerloff

Pesticides are a highly toxic solution to destroying insects in order to prevent the damage they cause to crops. They are used heavily within many parts of California, and more specifically the Central Valley and Central Coast agricultural fields, like those found in many parts of Monterey County. However, these same chemicals are dangerous and life threatening to humans, and especially farm workers that are on the metaphorical "front lines" of pesticide use. Furthermore, these chemicals can last within the environment for weeks and can travel many miles, which can affect anyone even remotely close to large agricultural developments.

If pesticides don't get removed from frequent use within our near future, there will be consequences to both our environment and to human health. Evidence has been shown to indicate that regular pesticide use contaminates our soils, our food, our water, and our bodies, and will continue to do so until they are removed from use entirely (University of California). Pesticides have also been linked to many neurological diseases as well as various forms of cancer when exposed prenatally (National Institutes of Health). Additionally, many forms of pesticides can last anywhere between a month to three or more years in the soil before breaking down entirely (Bureau of Agriculture). Although pesticides affect us all, farm workers and those living in lower-income neighborhoods that are near widespread pesticide use will be affected unfavorably compared to those living in higher-income areas. Without radical change, many of these consequences surrounding pesticides will continue unless a radical plan to heavily reduce or even eliminate all pesticide use is implemented.

Because of these facts, it is not hard for anyone to come to the conclusion that the DPR's Strategic Plan for 2024-2028 needs to be rejected in favor of a more fast-acting and radical plan. Pesticides are an extremely volatile subject, but ignoring the true issues in favor of slow-acting plans that don't face the issue head-on is not the correct way of going forward if the environment or human health are of any concern. Unfortunately, pesticides don't seem to be going away anytime soon, which will only further affect those who are on the front lines of agricultural work. I implore everyone to fight for this issue and to see that real change is made for the betterment of our environment and our collective human population.

**Public Statement on The Department of Pesticide Regulation's (DPR) Strategic Plan
2024-2028**

By: Stephen Gerloff

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