

Angela Lewis

Dear Department of Pesticide Regulation,

I am writing as a newcomer to the Salinas Valley region to express my deep concern and opposition to the upcoming Strategic Plan that involves the usage of 1,3-Dichloropropene (1,3-D), also known as Telone. The proposed regulation braises serious issues of environmental justice and equity that demand immediate attention.

As you are aware, 1,3-D is a known carcinogen and is currently the third most-used pesticide in California, including in Monterey Bay and Salinas Valley. The fact that this hazardous chemical is banned in 34 countries speaks volumes about its potential harm to human health and the environment. It is disconcerting that nearly 90% of its use in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties is concentrated in the Pajaro and Salinas Valleys, where a significant majority of our region's Latino and Indigenous populations reside, as compared to a significantly lower percentage of white residents. Despite being relatively new to the area, I have already heard countless horror stories of friends and family members succumbing to the lethal effects of pesticide usage in their communities.

The disproportionate burden of 1,3-D exposure on Latino and Indigenous communities is already a cause for concern. The proposed regulation's potential allowance for 1,3-D levels to exceed the current official cancer risk warning level by 14 times is alarming and would represent a clear case of environmental racism. Creating a weaker and separate standard for communities that are overwhelmingly Latino and Indigenous is unacceptable and perpetuates a policy of inequality.

I urge the Department of Pesticide Regulation to reconsider and revise the proposed regulation for 1,3-D in a manner that prioritizes the health and well-being of all residents, regardless of their ethnic or racial background. This includes setting standards that are stringent enough to protect all communities equally, without creating disparities that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. Furthermore, in lieu of Goal 3.3 of the Strategic Plan, the fact that there needs to be a notification system implemented to notify people of harmful chemicals in their area shouldn't have to exist. People should be able to live in their communities without the stress and worry of falling victim to the effects that pesticide exposure may cause (cancer, asthma, etc.).

Additionally, I request increased transparency in the regulatory process, including meaningful community engagement, to ensure that the voices of those most directly impacted by this pesticide are heard and considered.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I trust that the Department of Pesticide Regulation will take the necessary steps to address these concerns and uphold principles of environmental justice in the regulation of 1,3-D.

Sincerely,
Angela Lewis