

District 5 LULAC de Inland Empire

July 31, 2024

DPR: Attention Mr. Weller and Ms. Martinez:

Testimony Regarding the Pesticide Notification Plan

Thank you both for the outreach efforts and for ensuring that the voices of those most impacted have an opportunity to express the injustices presented in this plan.

As a representative deeply engaged in our community, I speak not only for myself but for countless others who labor tirelessly in the fields and live in the surrounding areas. These individuals are the backbone of our agricultural industry, and their health and well-being must be prioritized, even in the face of objections from the Mega Pesticide Industry and certain segments of the farming community.

Sincerely,

Anthony Noriega

Testimony on Pesticide Notification Plan

Hello, my name is Anthony Noriega, and I am a member of the League of United Latin American Citizens. We are deeply concerned about the ongoing use of harmful pesticides and their severe impact on our farmworkers and minority communities living near agricultural fields.

For years, advocates, farmworkers, and environmental justice groups have been urgently demanding a comprehensive statewide pesticide notification system. Our ultimate goal is to eliminate the use of dangerous pesticides in agriculture entirely. However, in the meantime, it is absolutely imperative that

communities are notified well in advance of any pesticide applications to protect their health and safety.

The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) is developing an online notification system, which is a step forward. However, the current draft fails gravely by omitting a crucial detail: the exact location of pesticide applications. Providing only a vague area within a one-square mile radius is wholly inadequate. We demand precise information to safeguard ourselves and our families effectively from these hazardous chemicals.

For years, I labored alongside my family and fellow farmworkers, tirelessly harvesting tomatoes in San Jose, Firebaugh, Mendota, Gilroy, and various locations across the San Joaquin Valley. During those long days in the fields, we often witnessed crop-dusters spraying pesticides indiscriminately, sometimes mere

feet away from where we worked. The fact that we continue to face this hazardous practice in 2024 speaks volumes about the disregard for the safety and well-being of farmworkers who sustain our nation with their labor. It is an urgent call to action to prioritize the protection of those who literally put food on our tables.

We, you and I, have a responsibility to ensure that our Latino communities and farmworkers are protected from dangerous pesticides and chemicals. Without exact location details, we are left helpless in protecting our homes, our schools, and our work environments. The vague, broad information leaves us in a state of constant alarm and uncertainty, unable to take the necessary precautions to safeguard our health and wellbeing.

The pesticide industry continues to neglect the needs of the most vulnerable among us—farmworkers and low-income communities—who lack the means to protect themselves from these dangerous chemicals.

Growers, pesticide producers, and sellers are primarily driven by profit, prioritizing their financial

interests over the health and safety of the very people who sustain our agricultural industry. Their relentless push to minimize regulatory safeguards and reject comprehensive notification measures is not just a lapse in judgment; it is a blatant disregard for human life.

This industry's persistent refusal to address the crucial issue of precise pesticide notification reveals a profound and troubling indifference to our well-being. It demonstrates a callous disregard for the families and communities at risk, whose lives and health are jeopardized by their actions. The industry's focus on

limiting protective measures while maximizing their profits highlights a systemic problem: they are willing to sacrifice the health of our communities for financial gain.

The lack of precise information in the current pesticide notification system poses a grave threat to our ability to safeguard our families and children. Without exact location details, we are left defenseless against the harmful effects of pesticide exposure. This omission endangers our most vulnerable members, including pregnant women, children, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions. They are at the highest risk and deserve full protection from these toxic chemicals.

LULAC strongly urge the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to mandate the inclusion of exact addresses for pesticide application sites in the notification system. The current one-mile radius standard is woefully inadequate and fails to provide the critical information needed to protect our communities effectively. It is imperative that the DPR prioritize health and safety over the interests of the pesticide industry. We must move beyond this outdated and insufficient notification measure. It is time for DPR to make a decisive choice between life and death. We need an immediate shift towards transparency and rigorous safety standards to ensure that every Californian, especially our most vulnerable populations, is fully informed and protected. The health of our communities and future generations depends on this fundamental change.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent concerns and for the opportunity to voice them. Our collective well-being and the future of our communities are at stake.

Sincerely,

Anthony Noriega,

Director, District 5 LULAC de Inland Empire