



Kern County Farm Bureau

President – Jenny Holtermann
1st Vice President – Alex Dominguez
2nd Vice President – Todd Snider
Treasurer – Lucas Espericueta
Executive Director – Rachel Nettleton

July 24, 2024

Dear Department of Pesticide Regulation,

The Kern County Farm Bureau (KCFB) is grateful for the opportunity to continue the discussion around the Notice of Intent (NOI) system, and we have actively been engaged in this issue for years. Unfortunately, we have many of the same concerns, and we still do not agree that public notification is necessary or increases overall safety for the public. Our biggest concern is that repeated notifications of potential pesticide applications can lead to greater public confusion and fear around safety. Access to pending applications outside of a 1-mile radius serves no public or individual benefit, but rather instigates unnecessary fear, or apathy from repeated notifications that could be hundreds or thousands of miles away.

KCFB would like to note that it is frustrating that the Department has singled out the agricultural use of RUPs for public notification. Structural and regulatory pest control, fumigation, landscape maintenance, and industrial use are commonly listed in the top five categories of pesticides used by pounds applied across all of California's 58 counties. Yet, they are not included in this public notification system.

We agree that it is very reasonable for notification to include active ingredients, permit and county number, application date range, and relevant label information but should not include acres applied. If the Department's intent is to truly provide greater transparency and a public right to know, that intention should not discriminate between the agricultural acreage and elsewhere.

We believe that the State and therefore the Department have a fundamental duty to protect ag employees and their family's sensitive information, while upholding transparency, human and environmental protection. Farmers and applicators who would be subject to notification are reasonably concerned that applicator-specific information could be found by activists to motivate protest events, on-farm trespass, provide personal identifying information to the public or encourage significant appeals of NOIs. If DPR cannot scientifically validate what health protective behavior should result following notification, and if there is no difference in health impacts between an immediate neighbor and one mile away, then the risk of identifying site of application is too great.

Therefore, we encourage the regulations to again, not specify acreage covered as we do believe that though there is no inclusion of address, in rural areas specifically, applicator specific information can be found. We also encourage dedicating additional state and county resources to be spent on enforcing the buffer zones that are currently in place and focusing on educational opportunities rather than managing a new unnecessary specific system.

KCFB also wants to note the efforts we have been doing for decades to encourage safety and transparency in the agriculture industry. Nearly 20 years ago Kern County was the first in the state to offer a Spray Safe program for our members, where annually we host almost 1000 farm workers and farm employers in a full day of workshops and demonstrations on safe applications of agricultural chemicals. We also have continued to work with Safe Schools programs and more to keep our communities safe.

As farmers, we too live in our agriculture communities. I myself along with my husband and two kids, live in the middle of one of our family farms. Our kids are often found at work with us on the farm, playing in the orchards, involved in our daily practices. Keeping our families, our farm workers and our community safe is always a top priority.

We hope to continue these discussions, as we approach the first quarter of 2025, and we appreciate your time and consideration, thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny Holtermann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jenny" being more prominent than the last name "Holtermann".

Jenny Holtermann

President, Kern County Farm Bureau