

# Future Leaders of Change

Dear DPR Director Henderson:

Our group of teenagers from the Monterey Bay would like to add to the many comments our members have made over the course of all three Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) hearings last month.

*We demand the exact location of the pesticide application be included in the statewide pesticide notification system.* We believe it is not notification without location. Your current draft keeps pesticide applications secret.

We were outraged when Roger Isom of the Cotton Ginners and Growers Association said at the July 12 Turlock hearing: “There’s concern that people are being exposed to pesticides when they spray them ... The fact of the matter is ... no way in the world would DPR or any ag commissioner in this room ever allow pesticides to be sprayed that would affect a farmworker or resident or innocent bystander. It just wouldn’t happen.”

What alternative universe is Mr. Isom living in?

The members of FLOC live in the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys, so we know we are exposed to pesticides that are harming us!

One of our members, Victor Torres, ended up in the emergency room for a severe asthma attack brought on by exposure at school to as many as 7 different hazardous pesticides.

The quarter-century CHAMACOS study of mothers and their children in the Salinas Valley has found harm from pesticide exposure – especially organophosphate exposure – that has included developmental, brain, and lung damage. A quarter of all organophosphate use in California is applied in the Salinas Valley.

The US EPA finds that current DCPA labels and use levels allow for exposure “10 to 1,500 times greater than what is considered safe,” yet neither you nor our Ag Commissioner has done a thing to restrict its use in over a year, despite half of all DCPA use in this state is in Monterey County and has been found on pesticide-detecting wristbands of teenage Latinas by the CHAMACOS team. Every time DPR has tested for 1,3-D air concentrations in Monterey County – whether in Salinas or Chualar or up in the Pajaro Valley at Ohlone Elementary School -- you have found levels above the lifetime cancer risk amounts set by our State’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. So, as for exposing us to highly hazardous pesticides, “no way in the world”? “It just wouldn’t happen?”

We need to know the exact location of pesticide applications, so we can do all we can to avoid the sites where they are applied and to take appropriate precautions, given the proximity of the applications to our homes, schools, and workplaces.

We wish Roger Isom was right, but the reason we need exact location in the pesticide notification system is because he is wrong. Completely wrong. You allow us to be exposed to chemicals that harm and even permanently damage us. The bare minimum is to give us a heads up as to exactly where the threat is coming from.

Sincerely,

Victor Torres

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Greenfield - Watsonville