

Californians for Pesticide Reform

Please see CPR's comments in uploaded document.



May 15, 2025

Karen Morrison
Director
California Department of Pesticide Regulation
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
EJACinfo@cdpr.ca.gov

Re: DPR EJAC

Dear Director Morrison,

I submit this public comment letter regarding DPR's Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) on behalf of Californians for Pesticide Reform (CPR). CPR is a statewide coalition of more than 210 organizations founded in 1996 to protect public health, improve environmental quality, and support a sustainable and just agricultural system by building a diverse movement across California to change statewide and local pesticide policies and practices. Our member organizations include public health, children's health, educational and environmental advocates, clean air and water organizations, health practitioners, environmental justice groups, labor organizations, farmers and sustainable agriculture advocates.

Our members are frustrated by the slow pace but pleased that the EJAC process is finally moving forward. We hope the first EJAC meeting will take place before Thanksgiving.

EJAC MEMBERSHIP

1. Scope of Work, Item 1, P.4: We recommend DPR appoint to EJAC the full 11 members allowed by statute, to ensure broad and meaningful representation. Given California's size and diversity, it is essential that farmworker communities and their allies are fully represented on the committee.
2. We previously submitted a list of vetted nominees to the EJAC (please see attached letter) and want to reiterate our strong support for those candidates. Each is outstanding, with deep connections in impacted communities and years of experience working on pesticide issues. All our nominees are farmworker and environmental justice advocates, and together they meet all the criteria DPR established for EJAC membership. We urge you to select the EJAC from this list.

The full list with additional background is attached, but we'd like to remind DPR of the many groups that were involved in the selection of our nominees, including the California

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Alliance for Family Farmers; California Nurses for Environmental Health & Justice; the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation; the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment; the Central California Environmental Justice Network; the Coalition Advocating for Pesticide Safety-Tulare County; the Coalition Advocating for Pesticide Safety-Ventura County; Future Leaders of Change; the Monterey Bay Central Labor Council; the Pesticide Action & Agroecology Network; Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles; Safe Ag Safe Schools; Sierra Club California; and Valley Improvement Projects, among others.

3. Regarding Draft Scoring Criteria, Criteria and Weights, P.2:

- a. With respect to the “environmental issues” language in the first two bullet points: We recommend higher points/preference for candidates who have experience working on pesticide issues or with communities impacted by pesticides, as opposed to people who have experience working on other environmental issues or with communities impacted by other environmental issues. Pesticide issues are extremely complicated and having candidates with that particular type of experience and expertise will be most helpful.
- b. We recommend that Policy and Regulatory Knowledge not be 25% of the score. It is less important that people bring to the EJAC policy and regulatory knowledge and much more important that the majority of EJAC members have real-world experience and expertise from living and working in communities most impacted by pesticides.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

1. We urge DPR to amend the Draft Scope of Work, Item 7, P.6, to make it explicit that the decision as to how many EJAC meetings are held per year is determined by the EJAC Committee. We recommend at least three to four meetings per year.
2. We urge DPR to amend the Draft Scope of Work, Item 3, P.6-7 to make clear that all EJAC meetings will be public and will have opportunities for public participation, including the ability for the public to provide written and oral comments, in person as well as virtually.

EJAC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES / DPR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. We recommend adding to items 4 & 5 on page 7 of the Draft Scope of Work that whenever DPR does not follow EJAC recommendations, DPR shall explain its reasoning as part of the department’s written response to EJAC’s prioritized recommendations. In addition, we recommend that all EJAC recommendations and DPR responses, including DPR reasoning, be publicly posted to the EJAC website.

2. We urge that the following be added to EJAC's Roles and Responsibilities and/or Purpose and Authority in the Draft Scope of Work:
 - a. reviewing and recommending improvements to the new SprayDays notification program, a role that is explicitly assigned to the EJAC in the notification regulation
 - b. provision of input and recommendations to the SPM Roadmap Pesticide Prioritization Committee.

OBJECTIVES

1. We ask that Item 1, P.3 of the Draft Scope of Work be amended so that EJAC's recommendations are not limited to external facing policies, programs, decision-making, and activities but include an ability for EJAC to make recommendations on internal matters, such as how DPR is focusing its resources, that affect external facing policies, programs, decision-making, and activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in, and we reiterate our interest in seeing EJAC set up and working as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angel Garcia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angel Garcia
CPR Co-Director



March 23, 2025

Karen Morrison
Director
Department of Pesticide Regulation
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via email: karen.morrison@cdpr.ca.gov

Dear Director Morrison,

We request that you consider the thirteen California residents we nominate for the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC).

After months of discussion and outreach, the Californians for Pesticide Reform network has agreed that the thirteen individuals below would make outstanding members of the EJAC.

The organizations involved in the selection of these nominees include the California Alliance for Family Farmers; California Nurses for Environmental Health & Justice; the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation; the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment; the Central California Environmental Justice Network; the Coalition Advocating for Pesticide Safety-Tulare County; the Coalition Advocating for Pesticide Safety-Ventura County; Future Leaders of Change; the Monterey Bay Central Labor Council; the Pesticide Action & Agroecology Network; Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles; Safe Ag Safe Schools; Sierra Club California; and Valley Improvement Projects, among others.

While all our nominees are farmworker and environmental justice advocates, this group also includes at least one person that meets each criterion DPR has set for EJAC membership including:

(A) At least two environmental justice leaders who represent rural communities with the most significant exposure to pesticides.

(B) At least one environmental justice leader who represents urban communities with the most significant exposure to pesticides.

(C) At least one representative of Native American, tribal, or indigenous groups.

(D) At least one farmworker advocate.

(E) Up to one person with expertise in issues affecting socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.

(F) Up to one agroecologist or biologist with an environmental justice background.

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The table below summarizes our nominees' match with DPR's EJAC criteria. More detailed biographies follow.

Nominee	Rural	Urban	Tribal/ Indigen- ous	Farm- worker Advocate	Disad- vantaged Farmer	Agroe- cologist/ biologist	Central Coast	Central Valley	Northern Cal	Southern Cal
Erika Alfaro	X	X		X					X	
Horacio Amezquita	X			X	X		X			
Martha Arguello		X		X						X
Robert Chacanaca	X		X	X			X			
Angel Garcia	X		X	X				X		
Bianca Lopez	X			X				X		
Emily Marquez		X		X		X			X	
Lupe Martinez	X			X				X		
Sarait Martinez	X		X	X			X	X		
John Mataka	X			X				X		
Rocio Ortiz	X		X	X			X			
Mechelle Perea-Ryan	X	X		X				X		
Victor Torres	X			X			X			

Short Biographies of CPR's EJAC Nominees

Erika Alfaro Lemus

Erika Alfaro Lemus is a public health nurse for Health and Family Services with San Mateo County, where she works as a nurse case manager for California Children's Services. Ms. Alfaro Lemus has a broad range of nursing experience, from pediatric cardiac ICU to utilization review and community health. Born in Michoacán, Mexico and growing up in the Bay Area, she has been working in the nursing field since the age of 18. Erika co-founded the California Nurses for Environmental Health and Justice, where she now stands as co-chair for the Farmworker, Food, and Agriculture committee. She is President of the San Francisco/Golden Gate Chapter of the

National Association of Hispanic Nurses. Under her guidance, the chapter launched a mentorship program, cultivating a community of Latino nurses. Erika is also a Spanish Bilingual SF Toastmasters past president.

Horacio Amezcuita

Horacio Amezcuita is currently working on an organic family farm in the Salinas Valley. He graduated from California State University of Monterey Bay with a concentration in Agriculture Business Management. Born in Mexico, Horacio came to live in the Salinas Valley in 1974, where he was a farmworker for many years. He has worked in managing farming, marketing, and housing cooperatives. Horacio's family was one of the original families that helped build the San Jerardo farm worker housing cooperative. He worked in the community of San Jerardo for 16 years as the cooperative's general manager. Horacio participates in various organizations in the Salinas Valley, including the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association, the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency, Community Water Center, Safe Ag Safe Schools, and Monterey Water Keeper. He has also served in the past in the following environmental justice organizations: Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, Greater Monterey County Regional Water Management Group, Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience Advisory Group, and Monterey Bay Community Power, among other grassroots organizations.

Martha Dina Argüello

Martha Dina Argüello has served in the nonprofit sector for more than three decades as an advocate, community organizer, and coalition builder. She joined Physicians for Social Responsibility—Los Angeles (PSR—LA) in 1998 to launch the environmental health programs, and became Executive Director in 2007. Ms. Argüello grew up in the Pico-Union area of Los Angeles and worked as a health educator in the 1990s. She is an active board member of numerous organizations, including Californians for Pesticide Reform, and Californians for a Healthy and Green Economy. She also co-founded the Los Angeles County Asthma Coalition and the Coalition for Environmental Health and Justice, and was appointed to Cal/Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Committee and the California Air Resources Board's Global Warming Environmental Justice Advisory Committee.

Robert Chacanaca

Robert Chacanaca is a Native American and retired educator and labor leader, living in the agricultural Pajaro Valley region. For more than 30 years, Robert worked in the Santa Cruz City Schools, while taking on numerous community, state, and national leadership positions, including President of the Monterey Bay Central Labor Council, President of the Santa Cruz Council of Classified Employees (Local 6084), Vice President of the California Federation of Teachers (CFT), President of the CFT Council of Classified Employees, and a Member of Policy and Planning Committee of the American Federation of Teachers. With a lifelong concern for

environmental justice, Robert has spoken at news conferences about pesticide harm, and co-authored the Advisory Opinion for the “People’s Tribunal on Pesticide Use and Civil Rights in California” in 2024.

Angel Garcia

Angel Garcia, born and raised in the southern San Joaquin Valley of California, is the son of indigenous farm workers. Angel has worked on many pesticide reform campaigns, co-founded the Coalition Advocating for Pesticide Safety (CAPS) in Tulare County, and has served since 2022 as Co-Director at Californians for Pesticide Reform. Angel graduated from the University of California Santa Cruz with a B.A. in Latin American & Latino Studies and Politics. He co-authored the peer-reviewed “Pesticide Use and Civil Rights in Central California: Slow Violence and the State” last year.

Bianca Lopez

Bianca is a first-generation migrant from Guadalajara Jalisco, raised in Los Angeles. She is co-founder and Executive Director of Valley Improvement Projects (VIP) based in Stanislaus County. VIP was formed in 2012 with the mission of improving the quality of life of underrepresented and marginalized residents of California’s Central Valley by promoting social and environmental justice issues through youth outreach, education, technology, and art. VIP is active in air quality, pesticide reform, climate justice, clean vehicle empowerment, and Zero Waste. Bianca has also worked as an After School Program Advisor for more than 15 years. She is featured in the 2024 documentary film “Burning Injustice” about the campaign to close one of the last trash incinerators in California.

Emily Marquez

Dr. Emily Marquez is a Senior Scientist at the Pesticide Action & Agroecology Network (PAN). She works in PAN’s Grassroots Science (GRS) program, managing PAN projects using the Drift Catcher to monitor for pesticides in the air with community partners. PAN’s GRS program works to translate science for the public and collects data with community groups interested in monitoring pesticide exposures through drift and water. These data are used to provide scientific information to regulatory agencies and also to aid communities in their work to change agricultural and pesticide policy. Dr. Marquez is co-author of PAN’s reports on children’s environmental health and pesticides: “A Generation in Jeopardy” (2012) and “Kids on the Frontline” (2016). Before earning her doctorate in Biology at Boston University, Emily majored in History and Integrative Biology as an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley.

Lupe Martinez

Guadalupe Martinez was born in Brownsville, Texas, and moved to California in 1964. He soon started working in the agricultural fields of the San Joaquin Valley and later became an

organizer, contract administrator, negotiator, Regional Director and National Organizing Director, and Vice President with the United Farmworkers. He retired from the Union in 2006 and then took a position as a Director at the Delano-based Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment (CRPE) to do environmental justice work. He now has retired from CRPE and is doing volunteer work with environmental justice groups, including founding the Delano Guardians, as well as sitting on the board of directors for CRPE.

Sarait Martinez

Dr. Sarait Martinez-Ortega is a Zapotec immigrant daughter of Indigenous farmworkers in the Salinas Valley and the current Executive Director at Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO). She has over a decade of experience in community and labor organizing, leadership development, organizing around environmental justice in farmworker communities, and educational equity among Indigenous immigrant youth. Dr. Martinez earned her Bachelor of Arts in political science and Chicano and Latino studies with a minor in economics as well as a Master's in Public Administration from California State University at Fresno. She earned a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from San Francisco State University, focusing on the education, empowerment, and well-being of Indigenous immigrant youth.

John Mataka

John Mataka grew up in Western Modesto and moved with his family to Grayson in 1979. John was one of the founders of the Grayson Neighborhood Council in 1985, a group that advocates for the residents of Grayson, Westley and Vernalis, and has taken on many environmental causes over the last forty years. Now retired, John was a drug-abuse counselor and Behavioral Health Specialist at Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services. Mr. Mataka, a Latino, received the Ralph Santiago Abascal Award for Environmental Justice Activism in 2003, presented by the Center for Race, Poverty, and the Environment. He also received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005 from the American G.I. Forum and the Man of the Year award in 2003 from the Minority Women's Network of Stanislaus County because of his advocacy for civil rights and social justice, among other honors.

Rocio Ortiz

Rocio Ortiz is the daughter of indigenous farmworkers from Oaxaca, Mexico, who has worked in the strawberry fields of the Central Coast herself. She is a 2024 Watsonville High graduate and first-year student at California State University Monterey Bay. Rocio co-founded the teenage environmental justice group Future Leaders of Change in 2023. While just 18, Rocio has already spoken at news conferences and written op-ed pieces about her concerns over environmental justice and pesticide use. Her documentary film entry into the Watsonville Film Festival, *El Pago 'Justo'*, is a reflection on her experience as a teen farmworker in the strawberry fields.

Mechelle Perea-Ryan

Dr. Mechelle Perea-Ryan is a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and Professor at California State University Stanislaus in the Central Valley. She is a Mexican-American, first-generation college graduate, who came from a working-class family living in a border town. She earned her PhD at UC Merced and is involved in health policy, pediatric health, health disparities, and decreasing the environmental impacts to health where we live, work, and play. First as a nurse, then FNP, Dr. Perea-Ryan spent over 30 years caring for Latino patients in the under-served Central Valley of California, with a particular focus on farmworkers and cannery workers. Her deep commitment to these communities has shaped her advocacy and teaching, bringing her knowledge, skills, and experience into the classroom to prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals.

Victor Torres

Now a Monterey Peninsula College student, Victor Torres suffered a severe asthma attack after pesticide exposure while at middle school in Greenfield. Ever since, he has been a leader in the cause of reducing pesticide harm, especially for children. In 2023, Victor co-founded Future Leaders of Change, an environmental justice group of teenagers with branches now in Greenfield, Watsonville, and Salinas. Last year, Victor was the lead spokesperson at legislative committee hearings and for the overall campaign to successfully pass AB 1864, which would strengthen the pesticide buffer zone policy around schools. With his brother, Victor co-directed a short documentary, *La Historia de Nosotros*, illuminating the potential environmental hazards to farmworker communities in everyday life. The film was an entry in the 2024 and 2025 Watsonville Film Festivals.

We would be happy to address any questions, including providing contact information for any of these candidates for the DPR EJAC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angel Garcia".

Angel Garcia
Co-Director