

Scientific Prioritization and Review Committee (SPARC)
California Department of Pesticide Regulation
1001 I Street (P.O. Box 4015)
Sacramento, CA 95814

August 10, 2026

RE: General Public Comments following the Inaugural August 2026 Meeting of SPARC

Dear Committee Members and DPR Staff:

I retired in January 2026 as the Chief of Human Health Assessment at the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) following nine and a half years in that role. I am a trained toxicologist and public health expert and dedicated 22 years of my professional career to the State of California.

The team in DPR's Human Health Assessment Branch successfully completed numerous scientific documents while I was with the department. Of those, was a new methodology for ranking the potential for conventional pesticides to impact human health. In developing this new approach, we considered older prioritization processes which were largely based on qualitative factors and professional judgement to determine which pesticides should undergo human health risk assessment.

This new methodology is a data-driven approach that accounts for pesticide toxicity and exposure and weighs other factors in order to rank conventional pesticides in terms of their potential to cause human health effects.

The overall goal is to numerically rank pesticides and focus risk assessments only on those chemicals with the highest potential to cause harm. Finalization, public release, and operationalizing the guidance would go a long way in guaranteeing that the department's limited resources and any resulting mitigation, regulation, and enforcement activities could focus on those pesticides that do the most harm.

But this methodology will only work when all conventional pesticides are ranked, and that those rankings are considered as an integral part of deciding which pesticides warrant further action.

I encourage DPR and SPARC to strive for a transparent data-driven approach to determining actions to reduce public and environmental impacts from pesticide use. I look forward to following your activities in the months to come.

Thank you.

Shelley Newman-DuTeaux, PhD MPH
newman-duteaux@outlook.com
916.826.3416