

## **SAFE STRAWBERRY MONTEREY BAY WORKING GROUP**

931 E Market Street, Salinas, California 93905

(831) 325-1681

December 8, 2015

Dear Santa Cruz Agricultural Commissioner Nicoletti:

On behalf of the Safe Strawberry Monterey Bay Working Group and the 1,500 Monterey and Santa Cruz County residents who have signed the attached petitions, we call on you to **immediately implement a one-mile "buffer zone" free of pesticides of public health concern around all schools and day care facilities to protect schoolchildren from the health threats of hazardous drift-prone agricultural pesticides.**

As you know, nearly two million pounds of highly hazardous pesticides are applied in Santa Cruz County each year, often near sensitive populations, like the dozens of schools in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. These pesticides include carcinogens, toxic air fumigants, brain-harming cholinesterase inhibitors, and pesticides that can cause reproductive and developmental damage. Many of these pesticides still used here have been banned in the European Union, including all three of the most used pesticides in Santa Cruz County, chloropicrin, 1,3-dichloropropene, and methyl bromide.

There are no air-monitors in Santa Cruz County, but the information from nearby sources is alarming and requires action. For example, the state air-monitoring device at Ohlone Elementary registered concentrations of 1,3-dichloropropene above cancer risk levels in 2012, and other schools have had even more 1,3-D applied near them than Ohlone.

Our call for a one-mile buffer zone is based in science, and we have attached a summary of the research that demonstrates the need for a protective zone at least that large to reduce harm to Santa Cruz County residents. While the Department of Pesticide Regulation has said it will eventually institute a statewide policy, which may include no-spray buffer zones, our concern is that they will be insufficient and far too late, as the state process is already months behind schedule.

We cannot wait for more lies from the pesticide industry, like those of Dow in its latest fraud regarding its recent attempt to get approval by the US EPA of Enlist Duo. This time, the EPA caught Dow's lies about the lack of interactive effects of its combined pesticide product.

We cannot wait for more scientific studies that demonstrate the health harms of agro-chemicals to our communities, like last week's UC Berkeley CHAMACOS study revealing reduced lung function in 7-year olds who have been exposed to organophosphates in the Salinas Valley.

As we are sure you are aware, the Santa Cruz County students most in harms way from these pesticide threats are Latino children. It is your job to protect Latino children just as well as white children.

Sincerely,

Safe Strawberry Monterey Bay Working Group Members