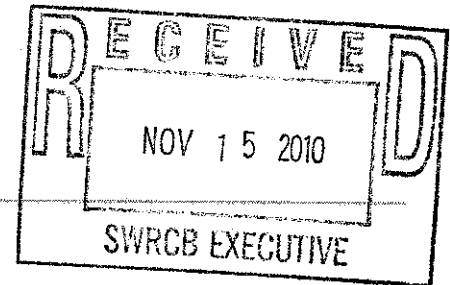


commentletters - Public Comment re pesticide BMP proposal

From: Bob Rawson <iws@sonic.net>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Monday, November 15, 2010 9:05 AM
Subject: Public Comment re pesticide BMP proposal



Dear Water Board:

As the Vice President of Northern California River Watch I want to reiterate the comments you have received from Mr. Hansen. I have incorporated his comments below my own to indicate complete agreement and validation. Having been licensed in all categories of pesticide use I know from personal experience that what you are proposing will cause a continuation and acceleration of the enormous environmental damage already done by the spraying programs of the past.

The Government has no legitimate need for or use for pesticides on the public lands that it is supposed to be protecting. All of these lands existed from time in memorial without any pesticide, fungicide, or herbicide being sprayed on them. It goes without saying that the soil, water and stock of plants, animals, fungi, and other measures of wealth were in better condition and more valuable than they are today because of this absence of spraying poisons. Herbicides and fungicides kill important living systems, and damage our water sheds and limited supplies of drinking water. I can show you evidence of this any time you wish to be educated on the subject. EIR's and the kinds of studies you rely upon for the most part completely ignore (4) of the (6) entire Kingdoms of living organisms, including: all of the Fungi, protozoa, bacteria and archaeobacteria, and most of the beneficial worms, insects, and food chains they support. Are you blind to the impacts being directed upon most of the biomass of the earth. This is public land. This is a public trust you hold. The studies you rely upon pay only lip service to a few of the most obvious vertebrates and economically important plants when they have to. The biostitutes engaged in this minimal window dressing then minimize the impacts and compromise away critical habitats. Are you people mad. What other planet were you planning to move to when you totally collapse life on this one. Do you know what a food chain is? Do you know what chronic toxicity is? The use of these poisons on public trust lands consumes a vast treasury of public tax payer funds in order to buy these poisons. Those tax payer funds are in short supply and should be expended judiciously to protect these same lands. These pesticide spray programs on public land are actually disguised subsidies to various special interests that have access to these lands at less than their value, and large subsidies to chemical manufacturers who manufacture these poisons. The biggest being the petrochemical industry. This is not just another misuse of public funds and property but also a tragic abuse. River Watch will be looking for opportunities to intervene and redistribute these funds in the interests of protecting the environment which your disingenuous BMP's seek to exploit for private profit. Please stop this criminal waste of tax payer funded subsidies and destruction of public resources for private profit.

Robert Rawson,
Vice President,
Northern California River Watch

Mr. Hansen's' comments reiterated below:

I understand that the permit under consideration is USFS land which comprises about 50% of the north coast region. The draft permit appears to cover a whole range of toxic chemicals--pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, etc.(I'll call all of these pesticides) and a wide range of applications from localized treatment

to aerial spraying. Some of these pesticides may be applied in a very localized way and could be of lesser concern. However, the larger projects, especially spraying and aerial spraying, are very worrisome and I object to the "kitchen sink" approach. I don't know how such a large and on-going permit could be monitored and enforced. Do you? How?

Spraying pesticides assumes perfect conditions of no wind, no unintended wildlife in the area, nothing that will enter the area right afterward, no migration of of poisons, no impacts from the chemical breakdown byproducts or the inert chemicals, no rain or moisture to dissolve and carry off chemicals, and no other animals that will visit the site to consume a targeted species and carry it into the food chain. All that is required is for the applicator to read and follow exactly what is on the label. Unfortunately, even if the label did have sufficient information and in the right language, perfect conditions really don't exist so there will always be toxic impacts beyond the target. With this in mind, how will public notification be implemented?

There is a range of potential problems with not only how it is applied but also with the adverse impacts of the formulations. Some of the listed pesticides are carcinogenic and cause birth abnormalities. The active ingredients in the formulation are not the only chemicals in the formulation that are toxic to the target species and also on unintended targets. In the formulation, there are "inert" chemicals that can be as toxic as the active ingredient or more. Many of the pesticides claim a kind of proprietary secrecy on the formulations but this is basically a ruse since the other companies have the means to do chemical analysis while the public does not. Therefore, this is a secret kept from the public and one has to assume the worst when transparency is not forthcoming. Without this information how does an agency like yourself assess the consequences? How about come clean or don't play?

There is a phrase used in the document, "The BMPs required herein constitute Best Available economically feasible." I object to having BMP, Best Management Practice, construed or interpreted as economically feasible. "Economically feasible" is subjective and cannot be determined without bias to the detriment of adverse impacts to the environment. Will this interpretation be used?

Also, the following statement was made in the draft permit: "The conditions of this General Permit require residual pesticide discharges to meet applicable water quality objectives. Waters of exceptional quality may be degraded due to the application of pesticides; however, it would only be temporary and in the best interest of the people of the State." What best interest of the people of the State are intended here? This is not necessarily in my interest I assure you.

Your agency, of course, is mainly concerned with waters of the state and preventing pesticides from polluting such waters as a point or non-point source. As a concerned citizen, an informed advocate for clean water, a camper, boater and a swimmer, I see no way to regulate a permit of such breadth of pesticide applications and be any way assured that our waters are not being polluted. In my view, this permit should be denied. The various projects should be parsed out into sub-projects and come back for review. Some have varying levels of pollution implications while others, such as aerial spraying, have much greater ones. These projects should have greater scrutiny, and if appropriate, denied on the grounds they are infeasible due to containment problem

Finally, please apply the following laws and guidelines:

Beneficial Uses in Basin Plans
National Toxics Rule (NTR) and California Toxics Rule

State Implementation Policy
Antidegradation Policy
Endangered Species Act
Resolution No. 68-16

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Larry Hanson
Manager, River Watch