

**Statement of Edward Segal
Chief Executive Officer
Marin County Association of REALTORS®
Before the California State Senate Food and Agriculture Committee
Sacramento, California
March 23, 2010**

Good afternoon. Mr. Chairman. I am Edward Segal, chief executive officer of the Marin County Association of REALTORS®.

I am here on behalf of our 1,500 members to express support for the immediate end of the state's light brown apple moth program. Although I am speaking here today for the association, in the interests of full disclosure, you should know that I own and live on a seven-acre organic apple orchard in Sonoma County.

The Marin Association of REALTORS® first got involved in the light brown apple moth issue in 2008. At that time, the state was planning to conduct an aerial campaign to eradicate the moth. As part of the campaign, airplanes were going to repeatedly spray nine Northern California cities with pesticide-filled plastic flakes every 30 to 90 days, possibly for several years.

Our association was so concerned that aerial spraying would be harmful to the quality of life in Marin County that we asked the state to limit the campaign to a ground-based approach.

Our REALTOR® members were so concerned that they insisted we include a warning about the potential for aerial and/or ground spraying throughout Marin in our countywide disclosures form that potential home buyers are asked to sign.

We did as our members asked, and also added the following language to the form:
“Buyer is advised to consult with environmental health specialists and physicians for further information regarding pesticide spraying.”

The state announced earlier today that it has shelved its eradication program in favor of a control and suppress approach.

It also claims that aerial spraying is no longer an option in dealing with the light brown apple moth. Steps should be taken immediately to keep it that way, and ensure that aerial spraying is not for any reason in the future.

Why? Because aerial spraying, if conducted for any reason, could further harm an already sluggish housing market.

According to an economic impact report prepared by the California Alliance to Stop the Spray, there could be as much as a 10 percent drop in home value in the nine Northern California counties if spraying were allowed to continue.

Today we are joining with a broad coalition of farmers, businesses and community groups and organizations to call for the termination of the entire light brown apple moth program.

As we have heard from experts today and before, we believe there are simply too many concerns, unanswered questions and unresolved issues associated with the program. We would rather be safe than sorry. We hope this committee feels the same way.

The question must be asked, however, that if the state no longer believes that the light brown apple moth is worth eradicating, is it even worth trying to control or suppress?

Indeed, based on what we have heard from experts, the program appears to be a solution to a problem that does not exist.

In these challenging economic times, the state should use its limited money and precious resources to help address real problems and more pressing issues.

We hope the state will do the right thing and end the program now.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.