

Petition Target:

Oakland City Council, Mayor Ron Dellums, City Attorney John Russo

CC: Oakland Public Works Agency, Adopt-A-Spot Program

More information, and downloadable petition to distribute, available at www.dontspraycalifornia.org/oaklandban.html

Please send signed petitions to: **Don't Spray California, 2399 E.14th Street #24, San Leandro, CA 94577**

REVOKE OAKLAND PUBLIC WORKS AGENCY'S AND ALL EXEMPTIONS OF THE CITY'S PESTICIDE "BAN"

In 1997 the Oakland (CA) City Council unanimously voted in Resolution 73968 C.M.S., "adopting Integrated Pest Management Policies". This self-described "ban on pesticides", recognizes that pesticide use presents a hazard to people and the environment. However, the many exemptions to the ordinance renders the pesticide ban a meaningless sham, and endangers residents, workers, visitors, and the environment of the City of Oakland and surrounding areas.

The exemptions cover vast categories of pesticides, including pesticidal soaps, insect growth regulators, microbials, botanicals, synthetic pyrethroids, horticultural oils, insecticidal bait stations, the category 1 pesticide aluminum phosphide on sports fields, as well as swimming pool chemicals, disinfectants, and antimicrobials, and other undisclosed pesticides, including for "weed control", in other words herbicides, in various locations.

The exemptions also cover vast areas of the city, including "weed control" during construction of any new landscaping and ball fields, and around "selected" fire hydrants, as well as undisclosed pesticides at the Oakland Museum, municipal golf courses, putting and lawn bowling greens, sports fields, swimming pools, public streets and rights-of-way, and the Morcom Rose Garden (though herbicides are not exempted at the latter). While limited warning signs are required before pesticide applications, in order to read them one is often already exposed to the pesticides. Many of the locations of pesticide use are unavoidable, and all present obstacles for equal access especially for many disabled people.

While recognizing the health hazards of pesticides, one of the exemptions irrationally exempts pesticide use that is "required to preserve and/or protect human health and safety", according to "guidelines established by the Alameda County Health Agency". It is unclear what pesticide use could be "required", but county health agencies are frequently involved in "fogging" of neighborhoods with insecticides for mosquitoes, for example, and routinely promote toxic chemical use on children to repel ticks, fleas, and mosquitoes.

One of the most extensive of the exemptions to Oakland's pesticide ban allows the city's Public Works Agency (PWA) to conduct widespread pesticide applications throughout the city. Two of the pesticides the PWA uses on medians, including those across from especially vulnerable sites such as Children's Hospital, are Roundup and Surflan, the dangers of which have been known since at least the 1990's.

Glyphosate, the active ingredient of Roundup, has been linked to cancers, reproductive harm, genetic damage, thyroid disorders, respiratory illnesses, and other ailments. Glyphosate contains POEA, a surfactant contaminated during manufacture by 1,4 dioxane. Metabolites and breakdown products of glyphosate include formaldehyde. Both 1,4 dioxane and formaldehyde are recognized as carcinogens under Proposition 65. In spite of manufacturer's claims to the contrary, glyphosate is mobile in soil, measurable up to 3 years after application, and spread by rain water runoff. It has been found in watersheds, groundwater, and even drinking water. Its manufacturer Monsanto has been sued and fined repeatedly for false claims about this and other products' safety, most notoriously Agent Orange. (For details about glyphosate see www.dontspraycalifornia.org/glyphosate.html)

Oryzalin, the active ingredient of Surflan, is linked to reproductive harm, central nervous system depression, is a possible human carcinogen according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and is contaminated during manufacture by N nitrosodipropylamine (NDPA), a confirmed human carcinogen under Proposition 65. It is mobile in soil and has contaminated rivers, streams, and wells. Its manufacturer, Dow, another manufacturer of Agent Orange, has also been fined for false safety claims. (For details about oryzalin see www.pesticide.org/oryzalin.pdf)

Volunteers for the Public Works Agency's Keep Oakland Beautiful and Adopt-A-Spot program commit countless hours of labor to maintain public spaces in their neighborhoods, often to prevent use of chemicals. Instead volunteers are being exposed to toxic pesticide applications by the PWA on their adopted spots, putting them at grave risk of serious health problems, and volunteers have in fact already been injured.

Nontoxic alternatives exist for all pesticide use. "Weed control" can be easily accomplished by a combination of sheet mulching with layers of cardboard and wood chips, and diverse plantings, which nurtures, rather than destroys, the soil and organisms that keep it healthy. So-called "weeds" serve a purpose in nature. They volunteer where damaged soil cannot support any life except the hardiest. They signal a first step towards a return to healthy soil. Pesticides suppress natural processes, which are not being given their proper time to work. Other nontoxic options for more conventional "weeding", include hand-pulling, using a weed wrench, steam, or radiant heat weeder.

If the City of Oakland has funds for expensive chemicals and licensed pesticide applicators, it can certainly afford manual labor and volunteer coordinators.

Revoke all exemptions of City of Oakland Resolution 73968 C.M.S.!

Follow the examples of other California municipalities, such as Arcata and Fairfax, and institute a real pesticide ban!

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