

NEW STATE AERIAL PESTICIDE REGULATIONS FAIL ALASKANS

Letters to newspapers and State Legislators are needed to help keep our fisheries, waters, wild and traditional foods safe from pesticides!

For the first time ever, the State has created a regulatory system that endorses aerial spraying. These regulations allow chemicals to be sprayed from helicopters and planes within 35' of waterways and 200' of drinking water sources. The regulations do not require on-site notifications or local meetings with affected parties. With its new aerial pesticide spraying regulations, the State of Alaska has ignored health concerns raised by biologists, doctors, commercial fishermen, Native leaders, local governments, public health officials, organic farmers and other Alaska residents statewide. These regulations become effective November 30th, 2003.

Pesticides are linked to serious human health problems; most have a high persistence in the environment and have been found to contaminate drinking water sources and salmon streams. Aerial applications of pesticides are notoriously inaccurate—pesticide drift can contaminate lands and waters up to 50 miles from the area of application. With the state's new regulations, "pesticide free zones" won't control drift of these contaminants that will make their way into our waters and food sources. The regulations do not provide for community right-to-know about aerial pesticide applications in the places where we hunt, fish and harvest berries and plants.

WARNING: Many of the more than 5,200 registered pesticides in the State of Alaska are correlated with serious health **risks to people (including miscarriage, asthma, birth defects, cancer, abnormal sperm and other reproductive defects, neurological harm, endocrine disruption and acute poisonings)**, in addition to high toxicity to non-targeted plants, birds, aquatic species (including salmon), and beneficial insects and spiders.

What can you do?

The Legislature can reverse this decision and protect public health, fisheries and subsistence from pesticides. Please ask your state legislators to support:

- Senate Bill 233—Sponsored by Senator Johnny Ellis, this bill would ban aerial spraying of pesticides except for public health emergencies. Please let your legislators know that you are not willing to tolerate uncontrollable applications of poisonous pesticides.
- House Bill 314 – Representative Sharon Cissna's citizen right-to-know bill would require improved notification of commercial pesticide use, and statewide tracking system and registration and licensing fees. The companion bill on the Senate-side is Senate Bill 27.
- **To contact your State Legislators, see:**
<http://www.gov.state.ak.us/ltgov/elections/distcom.htm#targetk>

Hold officials accountable in the public eye. Help educate others and call for standards that truly protect Alaskans. Please send letters to your state-wide and local newspapers (Remember to include your name, organization or affiliation, hometown and a phone number)

- Anchorage Daily News letters@adn.com Fax 258-2157 (less than 225 words)
- Juneau Empire streed@juneauempire.com Fax 586-3028 (less than 400 words)
- Fairbanks Daily-News Miner letters@newsminer.com (less than 350 words)
- Your local paper

BACKGROUND ON PESTICIDES

False Advertising: 'Pesticide-free zones'

Despite scientific studies provided to ADEC that show that pesticide drift from planes and helicopters can drift from 100 meters to 50 miles, the new regulations establish so-called 'pesticide-free zones' which—despite protest in public comments—remain only 35 feet from marine waters, lakes, and salmon streams and minimal buffer zones of only 200 feet around known drinking water sources.

Pesticide Drift is Inevitable

The only way to prevent pesticide contamination is to prohibit inherently harmful aerial applications of pesticides and to require sustainable non-toxic, non-chemical management practices, such as mechanical removal of unwanted vegetation. This manual labor would provide jobs and not run the risk of contamination from toxic ingredients in herbicides. ADEC regulations make no restrictions for aerial applications in hilly conditions that may exacerbate the problem of pesticide contamination from drift. The regulations do not provide adequate wind speed restrictions to reduce problems associated with drift.

Pesticides are Linked to Cancer, Birth Defects, Parkinson's disease and Reproductive Disorders

Glyphosate is the active ingredient in one of the herbicides that the Klukwan timber corporation proposed to aerielly spray. A 1999 study, *A Case-Control Study of Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma and Exposure to Pesticides*, (American Cancer Society, 1999), found that people exposed to glyphosate, are 2.7 times more likely to contract non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma (non-Hodgkin's lymphomas includes a large, diverse group of cancers of immune system cells). The most recent data (1998) from California's Department of Pesticide Regulation finds that **glyphosate ranks first among herbicides as the highest causes of pesticide-induced illness** or injury to people in California. (CA Pesticide Illness Surveillance Program Report – 1998. Table 4. <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dprdocs/pisp/1998pisp.htm>). Glyphosate is the main ingredient in the common household weed killer, Roundup, manufactured by Monsanto.

Salmon Threatened by New Pesticide Regulations

Allowing aerial spraying of pesticides for forestry management will wreck havoc on the Alaskan salmon industry by diminishing salmon stocks and survivorship, and by reducing market demand for wild Alaska salmon. By allowing pesticides to get into our salmon streams, the State's proposed pesticide regulations will counteract the millions of dollars Alaskans have spent to market our wild salmon as pure and chemical-free. A huge body of scientific evidence shows that pesticides have a variety of detrimental effects on salmon and other aquatic life. Much of this evidence comes from research and field studies by EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. In fact, a **2002 federal district court ruling confirmed the causal link between pesticides and negative impacts on salmon.** (Washington Toxics Coalition v. EPA July 2, 2002)

As Thomas Pope, Seafood Producers Cooperative board member, wrote to the State, the Marine Stewardship Council certification "is of paramount importance to the worldwide marketing of this fish... Were pesticides to be found in these fish, this certification would be void, causing tremendous market damage."(Comments to DEC)

Public Notification and Rights to Appeal

The regulations provide for only a small public notice in the newspaper 6-8 weeks before aerial pesticide applications. Unless the state agency accepts an appeal of a permit, spraying would be allowed to occur 40 days after the permit was granted. The time between public notice and hearings is just 15 days under some circumstances. (Section 18 AAC 90.520). **See the new pesticide regulations** at <http://www.state.ak.us/dec/deh/90mas1.pdf>

What Would Safe Pesticide Regulations Look Like?

The State of Alaska can adopt a preference for non-toxic, non-chemical measures such as mechanical treatment (like thinning or brush removal by hand or machine). If pesticide use can't be avoided, the State must at minimum:

- 1) Ban aerial spraying of pesticides (Senate Bill 233)
- 2) Require a permit be obtained before any ground application of pesticides;

- 3) Ban the use of pesticides in areas where subsistence activities occur;
- 4) Protect fisheries and water by requiring ground applications to strictly follow a no-application zoning of at least 1 mile for drinking water sources and 300 feet from fish streams or other surface waterbodies;
- 4) Require ground pesticide applications to use products that

- are least toxic to humans, fish and other wildlife and that are least likely to contaminate groundwater and surface water due to leaching or runoff; and
- 5) Require the State and applicators to hold local meetings and post signs in the spray area to alert the public prior to pesticide use.

Letters to the Editors – *Be sure to include your full name, affiliation (if any), hometown and a contact phone number. Personalizing your story will make it more compelling. We suggest calling the editor(s) to make sure it gets in print.*

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