



# School Pesticide Monitor

A Bi-Monthly Bulletin on Pesticides and Alternatives  
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## California Schools Implement Stronger Pesticide Requirements

California schools have started implementing new pesticide reporting and use requirements with the start of 2015. All schools and child day care centers statewide are now required to report their annual use of pesticides to the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR).

The requirement comes via amendments made to the state Healthy Schools Act, which requires schools and day care centers to:

- Develop an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan and make it available to the public.

- Report pesticide use at minimum once a year for pesticides that are not exempt. The first reports will be due January 30, 2016, and will include use from January 1 to Dec. 31, 2015.
- After July 1, 2016, school staff involved in application of pesticides will be required to complete school-related IPM training annually.
- Professional applicators will be required to receive this training before application at a school site.

In the past, pesticide use on school property was reported to the state

by the applicator, which was usually a company contracted by the school district. Now the district must report all use of these chemicals by its own staff.

“The real effect in January. . . means that school districts will have to start taking much better records of all the pesticides and regulated ingredients they use,” said Rob Corley, field representative for the state Department of Education who covers Monterey County, where the farming intensive and pesticide-besieged Salinas Valley is located. Corley added that this

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## House Panel Rejects Hawai'i Bill to Impose School and Hospital Buffer Zones

A bill brought in by state legislators in Hawai'i late January to establish pesticide-free zones around schools and hospitals throughout the state, has been rejected by the Hawai'i State Agriculture Committee late February. The proposal, House Bill 1514 sought to prohibit farmers from using large amounts of pesticides within a specified distance of schools and hospitals, known as buffer zones.

Not surprisingly, companies (like Monsanto) that compose Hawai'i's \$243 million seed industry argued that the measure was misguided, and several farming organizations opposed it as well. “HB 1514 will take

farmland out of production, increase costs, and make it even more difficult to farm in Hawaii,” the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation said in written testimony. The state Department of Agriculture was also critical of the bill and its focus on the seed industry. While the idea of imposing buffer zones still has a chance in the Senate, it must get past a number of obstacles.

“We want to provide meaningful protections that are going to keep pesticides from drifting into our schools and hospitals and affecting our kids,” said State Rep. Chris Lee, chair of the State House environmental protection committee who introduced the bill. “I think protecting our kids from

chemicals is a common sense thing that everybody can get behind.”

Beyond this common sense reason and general concern for the health of children and those already facing compromised health, Hawaiians have also experienced numerous pesticide drift and exposure incidents at schools in the past years. These incidents spurred a similar bill to that proposed by Rep. Lee, which ultimately failed.

Additionally, three similar measures have passed the Senate committees on health and the environment but are waiting for additional hearings.

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## California

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new reporting process for schools will be similar to that used for the agricultural and home fumigation use of pesticides.

Children's exposure to pesticides has been a constant concern in California, which has a large agricultural and farming sector. Children in Salinas Valley are especially at risk, according to a state report on pesticide use near schools. The report, issued by the California Environmental Health Tracking Program (CEHTP) and titled "Agricultural Pesticide Use near Public Schools in California," called for larger buffer zones around schools, which now stand at 500 feet. The report found that finds 36 percent of public schools in the state have pesticides of public health concern applied within a quarter mile of the school. Persistent and toxic pesticides like chlorpyrifos, methyl bromide, and malathion are among the pesticides found to be applied near schools. Additionally, Latino children are also more likely to attend schools near areas with the highest use of pesticides of concern.

The health effects linked to children's pesticide exposure are extensive. Recent research from the University of California, Davis CHARGE (Childhood Autism Risks from Genetics and the Environment) study found that pregnant women who lived within a mile of agricultural fields treated with insecticides are more likely to have

their child develop autism. For more information, visit Beyond Pesticides' Pesticide-Induced Diseases Database, which tracks the science on how pesticides are contributing to the rise of learning and developmental disorders in children.

Monterey County's use of pesticides and fumigants was also among the CEHTP report's findings. This county:

- Had the highest percentage of schools — 21.2 percent — in the top quartile in the state.
- Has the highest percentage of children — 25.1 percent — in the top quartile in the state.
- Latino children are 46 percent more likely to attend a school adjacent to pesticide applications than white children.

"Pesticide use in our community is a major concern" said Terry Ryan, the district director of maintenance, operations, transportation and safety, and food services in the Salinas City Elementary School District. That is why the district is trying to move away from using them, he continued. "We're trying to eliminate as many as possible." For example, Roundup, a major pesticide formulation containing the active ingredient glyphosate, was taken out of rotation in the past year.

The district does not purchase pesticides. As an alternative to herbicides, Ryan said a homemade concoction of white vinegar, Epsom salts and Dawn detergent is now used to eradicate

weeds and other pesky growth. In addition, Salinas City officials discourage use of any product that may carry a warning label indicating it may be harmful to children, he said.

"We've had teachers who bring in a can of Raid," Mr. Ryan said. The can is confiscated and properly discarded. "We haul them away because it is so against the rules to have pesticides in the classroom. It is an extreme health hazard to students," he said.

The district is adamant about prohibiting products that warn to "keep out of reach of children."

Children face disproportionate hazards from pesticide exposure, taking in more pesticides relative to their body weight than adults through the food they eat and the air they breathe. With their developing bodies, children can be more sensitive to toxic chemicals. As such, laws governing pesticide use in and around schools are especially important given these unique hazards. Check out Beyond Pesticides' work on Children and Schools. For even more information, see the latest news on children's health and pesticide use in schools, information on childhood asthma, current state/local policies, model policies to pass in your community, information on school integrated pest management and the School Pesticide Reform Coalition. See also alerts, media (PSAs and press releases), publications (reports, factsheets and more), and resources.

## Buffer

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Senate Bill 801, which pertains to providing notice for pesticide use, was recently re-referred to the Senate Finance Committee, chaired by Sen. Jill Tokuda. Senate Bill 1037, which requires the health department to establish a mandatory disclosure program for pesticide use, is also waiting

to be heard by Sen. Tokuda. Senate Bill 793, which establishes mandatory notice when pesticides are applied outdoors near sensitive areas, is awaiting a hearing from Sen. Tokuda and Consumer Protection Committee Chairwoman Rosalyn Baker from Maui.

Many of the supporters come from

localities, such as Kauai and Maui, where local ordinances were passed in an attempt to establish similar pesticide-free buffer zones, as well as genetically-engineered (GE) crop cultivation restrictions. After legal challenges from the likes of Syngenta, BASF, and DuPont, however, many of these local efforts have been invalidated or remain in legal limbo.