

Midcoast Community Council

An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar

PO Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 | midcoastcommunitycouncil.org

Gregg Dieguez | **Claire Toutant** | **Dan Haggerty** | **Scott Bollinger** | **Gus Mattammal**
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Date: December 13, 2023
To: Nicholas Calderon
CC: Ray Mueller, Mike O'Neill, Gina Quiney, Hannah Ormshaw

From: Midcoast Community Council
Subject: Request for Information re Pesticide Use in San Mateo County

As you are aware, a group of local residents, El Granada Advocates, has conducted research and raised concerns about the use of pesticides in SMC Parks and elsewhere in the County. They and their experts presented materials at the 10/25/23 MCC meeting [\[video\]](#) [\[link to materials\]](#). In addition, they have prepared a series of requested procedure changes (ASKS), which are attached.

As you and your team arrange for a meeting/presentation on this topic in January, we request that your team review and respond in writing to the ASKS attached, in addition to other information you may provide at that time.

The MCC has taken no position on this matter to date, pending your official response at that meeting and to this letter.

Sincerely,

s/Gregg Dieguez, Chair

Date 11/26/2023

San Mateo County Board of Supervisors 400 County Center, 1st Floor Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: San Mateo County Pesticide Use Documentation, Transparency, and Oversight Policy

Dear Honorable Members of the San Mateo Board of Supervisors:

As citizens living next to and using trails at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area GGNRA and San Mateo County Parks for recreation, we request the following transparency and potential implementations of Pesticide use to create awareness for public and pet health concerns. Such that the citizens can adjust their activity accordingly regarding exposure of themselves and loved ones especially if they have health conditions such as suppressed immunity or asthma.

We hope the Board of Supervisors can write a letter or speak in person with the GGNRA since your constituents have been affected by their spraying of glyphosate and the leaving of fuel load in the wildland urban interface. We have discovered it is the practice of both GGNRA and San Mateo County Parks to spray certain invasive plants regularly and leave them to degrade, yet they become fuel load. We have also discovered it is impossible to know how much pesticides are being used due to the ambiguous way they are being tracked at Agriculture Weights and Measures. Application of chemical quantity is tracked by all of San Mateo County including private lands. The parks and County are not separated out. Also, target pest/plant, type of application, and locations are NOT tracked.

First and foremost, this is a public health concern, and it affects fuel load, watershed, the health of our very sensitive ecosystems that are all connected via land and water, and climate resilience since these things are all connected. Glyphosate alone is failing as a tool and has become a liability. Some businesses are losing their insurance coverage because of the hundred millions in law suits if someone gets sick from it. [See link here](#) where a golf course (big user of pesticides and entrenched in the Bayer Rewards Program) stopped using glyphosate due to liability. It is surprising that we are still using glyphosate and other pesticides in California. We have tools that work without pesticides. Many municipalities are successful with using alternatives to pesticides or “organics only” and can provide policy working examples. Some of these municipalities are listed below.

In cooperation with Non-Toxic Neighborhoods, this is what we propose for the SMC Parks and all San Mateo County public lands:

TRANSITION TO REGENERATIVE LAND MANAGEMENT (RLM): This is a work in progress (or living policy) of moving off toxic pesticide use with goals to reduce and eventually eliminate it while gradually incorporating principles of regenerative land

management to regenerate soil thereby improving rain infiltration and water retention which will help keep the land hydrated, aquifers full, and create more carbon capture and climate/fire resilience. It will be tracked with clear records and annual reports and an oversight committee keeping the whole transition process and continued adherence accountable. The end goal is: using only organic pesticides when necessary (which are NOT part of any vendor rewards programs), working efficiently with volunteer groups to enhance manual work, using alternatives to pesticides, and where possible using regenerative soil management techniques to keep the soils healthy. This is a shift in how we view the land. We will be moving away from chemically dependent land management. Here are the steps:

- I. **NOTIFICATION:** of pesticide application to the public (more specific and clear)
 - a. Specific and advanced public posted notice (at least 1 week before and 1 week after) of Pesticide application.
 - b. Posting should be consistent, factual, onsite, and timely at the site of Pesticide application not just at the trailhead and not posted when not happening in the timeline above.
 - c. Info on posting:
 - i. Dates of application and keep dates updated if they change
 - ii. List chemical name, brand name of pesticide, EPA registration number
 - iii. Description of 'treatment' or application (spray or paint)
 - iv. Name of target pest/plant
 - v. Continue to provide reasoning, but add for specific plant/chemical (public education)
 - vi. Continue to post on the website for anyone or group field trips that need to be planned in advance.
- II. **TRANSPARENCY:** keeping more specific pesticide application records and an ANNUAL REPORT. The public should have easy website access to Regenerative Land Management (RLM) records (separating out County Parks and other County public lands), policies, specific procedures, and an annual report. Private lands are not of interest but should be separated out.
 - a. Records should continue to include a monthly report of Pesticide Use for San Mateo County, but records should be distinguishable so that one can find records with sum totals of use just for San Mateo County Parks which

would include all SMC Parks contractor use, and sum totals of use for other County public lands.

- b. All contractor names should be updated and listed on the RLM section of the website, since one must know names of contractors in order to request records from Agriculture Weights and Measures.
 - c. Records should continue to include date of application, name of pesticide applied, EPA registration number, and quantity used. In addition, it should include: target pest/plant, type of application (ex: spray or paint), dilution used, approximate square footage where work was done, and location applied using GPS coordinates on google maps. Some of this data is currently collected by contractors but not available to public records.
 - d. Record tracking requirements could be revised at Agriculture Weights and Measures or the County could create another database on the County website to track these transparent records available for public access.
 - e. All RLM Policies and Procedures for the Parks and other County public lands can be posted on County and Park websites along with the annual reports for the Parks and County Public lands.
 - f. The annual reports for Parks and the rest of the County could be combined or separate and should account for the total sum of all Pesticides (by name) used for the year, broken down into County Parks use, and the rest of the County public land use. It should show and explain percent use and changes in use of pesticides compared to previous years.
- III. **ACCOUNTABILITY**: create a pesticide oversight committee to track policy, records, and annual report
- a. Implementation of an RLM Oversight Committee or Task Force for San Mateo County which will oversee all County public lands including County Parks. The Oversight Committee will meet quarterly to review RLM records, policy, annual reports when applicable and work on ways the County can gradually reduce application of poisons on the land while finding ways to regenerate the soil where appropriate.
 - b. Individuals that should be involved include concerned community members, technical experts (regenerative or holistic grazing, alternatives to pesticide experts), local advocates opposed to chemical use on the land, elected official(s), and staff. Persons who should NOT be on the committee are anyone who has a financial stake in the outcomes of committee decisions or other motivations to continue pesticide use (ex: anyone including staff receiving cash back rewards from chemical suppliers, chemical suppliers, chemical industry employees, industry

based 'environmental' organizations that are motivated to continue pesticide use as a 'tool'...etc.)

IV. START AN ALTERNATIVES TO PESTICIDE PILOT WITH THE GUIDANCE OF NON-TOXIC NEIGHBORHOODS

- V. IMPLEMENT A STAFF, LANDSCAPER AND 3rd PARTY CONTRACT TO PREVENT THEM FROM BENEFITING FROM FINANCIAL INCENTIVES OR USING VENDOR REWARDS PROGRAMS (Bayer Rewards Program that rewards personal visa gift cards based on level of purchase) THAT MOTIVATE THE PURCHASE OF PESTICIDES** (We have wording for this type of contract and we can share with the County) We don't know if this is happening in our County, but this is a worldwide problem, so it should be prevented or stopped it in case it is happening.

SMC RESOLUTION: #071857 from the minutes of the March 13, 2012 Board of Supervisors meeting which documents the vote.

1. It specifies no broadcast spraying on County highways or County Parks. Why is there still spraying in parks?
2. We would like documentation of this resolution and easy website access.

CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES:

1. **Consider what other counties and cities are doing** to reduce or eliminate pesticide use in parks and open space such as organic non-selective herbicides and targeted and rotational grazing. (See below listed examples.) **Consider measure K for these climate resilience and fire resilience land management methods.**
2. **Organize Volunteers:** We request San Mateo County, SMC County Parks, and the GGNRA utilize and **organize volunteers** for manual labor and/or grazing goats instead of applying Pesticides where possible. An example is an 'Adopt A Park/Trail' program as done in Burbank. Youth groups take ownership of a park and its non-chemical management. Burbank even provides awards to the most weeds (by weight) "properly" removed. This type of program has built a very connected community.

Respectfully,
Melinda MacNaughton
On Behalf of concerned citizens of the Coastside Community and El Granada
Advocates

cc: San Mateo County Executive Officer/Clerk of the Board Mike Callagy, San Mateo County Attorney John Nibbelin
San Mateo County Assitant Attorney David A Silberman

A few Resources for County Review:

How Irvine became Non-Toxic with the help of Kim Konte at Non-Toxic Neighborhoods:
<https://www.ocweekly.com/how-irvine-became-socals-first-non-toxic-city-7317638/>

Example Annual Reports:

Irvine County

<https://www.cityofirvine.org/news-media/news-article/organic-pesticides-program>

Santa Clara County

<https://ipm.sccgov.org/sites/g/files/exjcpb1006/files/documents/FY%202021-22%20IPM%20Program%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

Marin

https://www.parks.marincounty.org/-/media/files/sites/marin-county-parks/projects-and-plans/ipm/annual-reports/ipm_ar_2021.pdf?la=en

Clear IPM Website Examples:

Irvine County

<https://legacy.cityofirvine.org/civica/filebank/blobload.asp?BlobID=29414>

Santa Clara County

<https://ipm.sccgov.org/program-implementation/stakeholder-outreach>

Marin County Parks

<https://www.parks.marincounty.org/projectsplans/ipm>

Richmond, CA

https://library.municode.com/ca/richmond/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=ARTIXHE_CH9.48INPEMAIP

Malibu, CA,

<https://www.malibucity.org/DocumentCenter/View/24741/Earth-Friendly-Management-Policy62419#:~:text=EFM%20incorporates%20the%20principles%20of,herbicides%2C%20insecticides%2C%20and%20rodenticides.>

Example Resolution/Ordinances/Bans:

Humbolt County Board of Supervisors Resolution Opposing Spraying of Herbicides

https://www.healthyhighways.org/_files/ugd/6612ef_a635e33fc2e847b184942e775cf5c32b.pdf

Windsor City Council Resolution to Discontinues the Use of all Pesticides

<https://www.townofwindsor.com/DocumentCenter/View/26086/3663-21-Approving-Exemptions-to-the-IPM-Policy-for-Pesticide-Application-for-Town-Own>

City of Arcata Ordinance Ban

<http://www.eastbaypesticidealert.org/Arcata.html>

Fairfax, CA Pesticide Ban Ordinance

<https://pesticidefreezone.org/about/fairfax-ordinance/>

LA County Ban on Glyphosate 2019

<http://www.boardofreps.org/Data/Sites/43/userfiles/committees/legrules/items/2019/Ir30076/Los%20Angeles%20-%20Ban%20Successful%20-%20Other%20CA%20Cities.pdf>