

*Updated October 31, 2007*

Dear Friends in the Monterey Bay Region:

If you are concerned about or opposed to the aerial spraying of this area with chemicals, please forward this message to your local friends and colleagues, and contact our government officials (see list below.) You might also call or email influential people at non-governmental organizations (the press, environmental groups, etc.).

**Background:**

The California Dept. of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is in the midst of aerial spraying two types of synthetic pheromones, called Checkmate OLR-F and Checkmate LBAM-F, over large parts of the Monterey Bay area.

The first round of spraying took place in Monterey, Seaside, Marina and Pacific Grove on September 9, 10, 11 and 12, and many citizens complained of having adverse reactions. Another round of spraying in the same area took place on October 24, 25, 26 and 27. The spraying could go on for months and years—possibly through mid-2010.

The CDFA's campaign is to eradicate a species called the Light Brown Apple Moth, which is considered a threat to agriculture. The agency plans to begin spraying Santa Cruz, Aptos, Capitola, Scott's Valley, Watsonville and other areas in early November.

To spray the synthetic pheromone, two to three airplanes fly over the area at a low altitude of about 500–800 feet. Citizens have been told to stay indoors, and to bring their pets indoors. If they've left laundry outside, the State has said that it would be a good idea to wash it, as well as outdoor furniture.

**21 REASONS TO BE CONCERNED**

**A summary of public comments at recent city hall meetings and in the press**

1. To a significant degree, the spraying of the Monterey Bay region is an experiment, as it is first time these chemicals have ever been sprayed over densely populated urban areas.
2. More than 200 people reported getting sick following the first round of spraying in the Monterey area on September 9, 10, 11 and 12. At least four of them required hospitalization, including a 12-month old boy whose parents had to rush him to the emergency room after his condition grew progressively worse the week of the spraying. He got to the point where he couldn't breathe on his own and was in the hospital for three days. Two weeks later, he had a relapse and was rushed to the hospital again. He has now been diagnosed with asthma, a condition he did not have before the spraying began (see executive summary of spraying-related illnesses below).
3. Neither the short- or long-term human health effects of the synthetic pheromone (which is designed to confuse the mating habits of male moths) have ever been

studied. Only the short-term effects of the active chemicals and inert ingredients have been studied on animals, not on humans. The long-term effects of the chemicals on prenatal health and infants are also unknown.

4. According to the CDFA's website, the chemicals in the spray are considered a pesticide, and the EPA prohibits the testing of pesticides on human beings. Yet no one is prohibiting the spraying of the chemicals on 100,000+ children, men and women, some of them expecting mothers, in the grandest (or gravest) test of all—and not just once, but at least twice this year (in Monterey), and possibly several times each year through mid-2010 (the duration of the CDFA's permit).

5. The product's label, which can be found on the manufacturer's website (Suterra LLC, of Bend, Oregon), says, "**Hazardous to Humans and Domestic Animals.** Harmful if absorbed through the skin. Causes moderate eye irritation. Avoid contact with skin, eyes, or clothing. Harmful if inhaled. Avoid breathing vapor or spray mist." The CDFA says this applies only to those who work with or apply the chemicals, and that the aerial spray will be diluted and therefore not harmful. Have they taken into consideration people with different body weights, chemical sensitivities, and levels of health and resistance, and the cumulative effect—for example, when dozens of children track the chemicals into poorly ventilated classrooms?

6. On September 28, 2007, the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* reported on the impending aerial spraying of the Santa Cruz area and listed the inert ingredients in the Checkmate OLR-F product. Shortly after the story was published, the *Sentinel* removed this information from its website, saying:

*"The Environmental Protection Agency inadvertently provided the Sentinel with trade secrets regarding the ingredients of Checkmate, OLR-F, the pesticide scheduled to be used in Santa Cruz County to eradicate the light brown apple moth. The ingredients of the pesticide are protected from public disclosure under the California Uniform Trade Secrets Act. The Sentinel, which published the ingredients in a Page A-1 story Friday, has removed this information from its Web site."*

A number of citizens in the Monterey area researched the inert ingredients listed in the Sentinel's article. They found that one of the ingredients, a form of isocyanate, can be extremely toxic to some individuals, causing asthma and other respiratory problems, skin rashes, stomach and muscle pain, severe headaches and other symptoms consistent with Monterey citizens' complaints. Suterra says this chemical changes or disappears during the manufacturing of the spray.

7. The secretary of the CDFA, A.G. Kawamura, who alone has made the decision to spray our neighborhoods, has a background in the agricultural business—not in science, medicine, public health or environmental protection. He is relying on the assurances of the chemical's manufacturer and, to a large degree, people on his staff with a background in agriculture, rather than on objective, long-term, peer-reviewed studies, which don't exist. The way the chemicals are made is actually the manufacturer's trade secret.

Likewise, the agriculture industry has a financial interest in advocating the aerial spraying. This powerful group, although likely full of decent people, is not necessarily focused on (or expert in) issues related to human health and environmental protection.

8. There have been no long-term, objective, peer-reviewed studies on the effects of the chemicals and inert compounds on Monarch Butterflies, nor the federally protected Smith's Blue Butterflies, California Sea Otters and other sensitive and potentially endangered species. The USDA admits that Checkmate OLR-F is "moderately toxic" to aquatic invertebrates (crabs, abalone, and other shell fish), part of a sea otter's diet.

9. The EPA prohibits the dumping of these chemicals over surface water, but not over people. The empty canisters used for the aerial spraying, and the residual chemicals, are considered hazardous waste.

10. The Santa Cruz City Council has expressed its opposition to the spraying at a meeting on October 9, and voted to look into legal action to stop the spraying in that area. The Monterey City Council, Pacific Grove City Council, Seaside City Council, after hearing extensive testimonies—including presentations made by staff of the CDFA—also expressed their opposition to the aerial spraying.

11. Years ago, the long-term effects of DDT and Malathion were not adequately researched when large amounts of those chemicals were sprayed, having widespread, negative impacts on people's health and the environment (malathion, called "low in toxicity" by the CDFA and state EPA, degraded into a substance called malaoxon when it was tracked indoors; maloxon is said to be 60 times more toxic and caused cancer).

Governmental agencies, while full of people who hopefully have good intentions, sometimes are swayed by special interests and act in ways that we later realize were irresponsible and even dangerous.

Governor Schwarzenegger, it has been reported, accepted \$143,000 in campaign in contributions from Suterra's founder and CEO.

12. Two hundred scientists from Harvard, Berkeley and other schools signed the "Faroos Statement" earlier this year, asserting that pre-born babies and infants are exponentially more vulnerable to toxins than adults. Here's link to a summary in USA Today: [http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2007-05-24-pregnancy\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2007-05-24-pregnancy_N.htm). Also, read the entire "Faroos Statement" by searching/Googling that name.)

13. The aerial spraying will take place over our homes, businesses, schools and playgrounds. The chemicals in the spray are designed to be time-released over thirty days. They will stick or embed themselves into the environment, including our yards, playground equipment, sand, plants, trees and so on. Students will track the chemicals into their classrooms daily, and with poor ventilation, the chemicals could build up and be more toxic.

14. Repetitive exposure to toxins is one of the ways that people develop various diseases. Another way is massive exposure at one time. Our repetitive exposure to chemicals that persist in the environment is cause for concern (the effects are not adequately understood because they have not been studied).

15. People with chemical sensitivities, compromised immune systems and respiratory ailments are understandably concerned. Some have said they will have to leave the area indefinitely if the spraying program continues, making one question whether civil liberties are being violated, and our unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

16. While people have been told by the CDFA to stay indoors and close their windows during the spraying, our region's homeless people will not have that option.

17. Unsuspecting tourists, out after 8:00 p.m., will not be aware that the aerial spraying is taking place until they see airplanes flying overhead at a very low altitude, spraying an unknown substance on them. Also, the aerial spraying could compromise our region's important tourism industry if potential visitors to the area become concerned (there are already reports of considerable negative chatter on sites such as Fodors.com). This would have a negative financial impact on a variety of business owners and their employees, including those at hundreds of restaurants, shops and hotels. Isn't their potential loss as important as any potential loss that the agricultural industry might face?

18. This spraying could compromise real estate values. Would you want to move somewhere that will be sprayed regularly for the next two or more years, and possibly through 2010? Should home owners shoulder the potential losses of agricultural companies?

19. Although the CDFA has declared the situation to be an "emergency," giving it broad, almost unrestricted powers, it is not clear how many agriculture products could be affected by the moths, or how severe or imminent the damage might be. Some people say the moths have been in California for as many as seven years (since they can be found from Napa to L.A. and can only fly a short distance in their lifetimes), and have not done any damage to crops or other plants (*Monterey Herald* editorial Sept. 6 and a UC Davis study available [www.1hope.org](http://www.1hope.org)). The CDFA admitted publicly in late October 2007 that the moths have done no damage to crops so far.

21. Safer methods of distributing the synthetic pheromone exist, including localized twist-tie objects that disperse the chemical pheromones from a bush or tree, and adhesive traps scented with the pheromone. The adhesive traps have been used in Napa and Contra Costa Counties, where Light Brown Apple Moths were also found. The CDFA is allocating at least \$15 million to the spraying in the near term (about \$1.3–1.5 million per three–four day campaign, to contract just two to three very small, single-seat airplanes), and can likely afford safer, less intrusive (although more labor-intensive)

measures. Longer-term remedies, such as dropping thousand of live, sterilized male moths, are presently in development and could be very effective in the future.

### **A Quote to Ponder:**

“We still see that here are people that are not comfortable. We’re going to try to do our best to help this Peninsula try to stay healthy. The most important point has got to be that the onslaught of invasive species is the bigger issue. We’re fortunate that we have a chance to eradicate this pest.”

—Secretary A.G. Kawamura of the CDFA, in the *Monterey Herald*, front page, Sept. 10, 2007 (see [http://www.montereyherald.com/ci\\_6850260](http://www.montereyherald.com/ci_6850260))

In other words:

- He is aware that citizens are not satisfied that the spraying is safe
- He and the CDFA are going to *try* to help us *try* to stay healthy (it’s really up to us)
- But getting rid of the moth is the priority and more important than our health anyway
- The bigger issue is the “onslaught” of moths. Are 453 moths trapped in a 60-square-mile urban area an onslaught?
- And, by the way, we’re all lucky to have this opportunity

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS OF SPRAYING**

### **Based on 120 citizen complaints through October 10, 2007**

More than 100 Monterey-area citizens have complained of unusual symptoms following the aerial spraying of a synthetic pheromone on September 9, 10, 11 and 12, 2007. Some of the reported adverse reactions were severe, and at least three required emergency medical attention at the Community Hospital of Monterey County.

Most of these citizen complaints were sent to a little-publicized email address, [ReactiontoSpraying@yahoo.com](mailto:ReactiontoSpraying@yahoo.com), and a corresponding post office box. Adverse reactions could be more widespread, since many citizens do not know about this reporting mechanism.

One ER case involved a one-year-old boy who had severe breathing problems and was in the hospital for three days the week of the spraying. After being discharged, the boy had a relapse and, as of October 3, was back in the hospital, this time at a Stanford University-affiliated hospital in Mountain View. The two other ER visits were adults who also had respiratory problems following the spraying.

Other complaints have included:

- Sore throats
- Nasal congestion

- Coughing or “wheezing”
- Asthma attacks
- Bronchial irritation
- Lung congestion and soreness
- Tightness in chest
- Difficulty breathing and shortness of breath
- Skin rashes (sometimes severe)
- Eye irritation
- Headaches (sometimes severe)
- Dizziness
- Muscle aches
- Intestinal pain
- Nausea
- Feelings of lethargy, malaise and an inability to focus

Some people have likened their illnesses to an allergic reaction. One woman said, “I feel like I am sick but I'm not sick.” Some visited their doctors, yet others said they did not because of the time and expense.

A number of people said they had left the Monterey-Seaside area during the September spraying and experienced symptoms immediately upon returning. Others said they experienced symptoms shortly after leaving their homes the morning after their neighborhoods were sprayed. Some reported that several members of their families experienced unusual symptoms at the same time shortly after the spraying.

**Governmental Contacts:**

Voice your concerns and opposition to the spraying by making some phone calls or sending email messages. In addition to your mayor and city council, below are some contacts at the state level. Also, please feel free to add contacts of your own. Our calls can make difference!

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**CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

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