

December 3, 2007

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

My name is Roy Upton. I am a long-term resident of the city of Soquel in Santa Cruz County. As you know, recently the state of California initiated a mandatory widespread spraying of Soquel and Santa Cruz residential areas as part of an eradication program against the light brown apple moth (LBAM). One of the reasons I have chosen to live in California is because of the commitment to environmental protection and sustainability that has been a hallmark of the California legislature and the California public at large. I was also heartened to hear your public comments about wanting California to be a leader in becoming a "Green State". It is a vision I most heartily support, so much that for the first time in my life I considered voting Republican.

I believe the spraying of this pheromone-pesticide goes against this basic commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability and is contrary to your personal commitment. It is clear that there has been no damage to crops by the LBAM and that your Secretary of Agriculture has acquiesced to the United States Department of Agriculture under threat of a quarantine by trade partners in Florida, Canada, and Mexico. It is a legitimate threat but I question the trade-off of putting economics before public health.

Not performing the appropriate environmental impacts, or seeking alternative, lower risk, integrated pest management methods for controlling pests suggests that any commitment to sustainability is only for paper and popular speeches. But I will give you the benefit of the doubt that perhaps you have deferred to your Secretary on this issue and formally request that you reevaluate the issue yourself.

Being truly sustainable and "Green" requires tough, sometimes painful decisions, with public and environmental health prioritized first, with all other priorities after this. I choose to buy almost 100% of my family's foods as organic; now I have to try to find non-fly zone produce. My wife and I raised our children with a strong ethic for environmental consciousness in what we believed to be the most environmentally conscious city in the most environmentally conscious state. This is literally gone now and will be gone should the spraying continue for the projected 3 years.

I believe it is unconscionable to subject me, my family, hundreds-of-thousands of children, and tens-of-thousands of pregnant women to pesticides and hormonal disruptors; this is regardless of how safe they are deemed to be by those with a vested interest. Doing so without direct safety assessment by EPA and the State of California,

in my opinion borders on negligence at worst and inappropriate priorities at best.

I understand the need to protect agricultural crops and the economic base that agriculture provides to California. However, I believe that public health must come before economic stability. Based on everything that I have read, I do not believe an adequate case has been made as to the relative damage anticipated from the moth, the California agriculture department reported that approximately 2% of crops COULD be affected and that absolutely no damaging effects due to the moth have occurred in California. In fact, in most countries and states where the moth has been found, the most significant economic damage is not due to the moth; it is due to economic sanctions. Something seems illogical about this. Even the 2% number seems exceedingly low compared to the hundreds-of-thousands of residents that will be exposed to a spraying of something whose human and environmental impact is really not known, and likely will not be known for decades.

Governor Schwarzenegger, perhaps more than any other issue, the spraying of residential areas without appropriate community participation and some level of consent, no matter how safe a spray is deemed to be, goes against every principle of human decency. Please have the vision and strength to put human rights and public health before economics. Industries have to evolve to deal effectively with whatever challenges they are faced with and those costs are inevitably passed on to consumers. Such is the nature of the marketplace and it can be done in positive partnership with residential communities. Subjecting residential areas to spraying under force by our state government, under threat by our national government, under false pretexts is completely unfair to us as individuals.

Governor Schwarzenegger, only you have the authority to stop this spraying and require that a more thorough and inclusive solution to this challenge be formed. The weaknesses and significant faults of the present program have to be acknowledged and alternatives more thoughtfully considered, with the hearts and will of California citizens in mind, not just the concerns of those with vested interests. That is all I will say of this issue for now.

On a more personal note, earlier this year it was my distinct pleasure to visit Graz. It is an incredibly beautiful city. I believe the stadium workers were in front of the stadium flipping a Euro to see if they should take down or leave up the stadium name (smile).

I wish you well in your work, your health, and your family.

My sincere regards.

Roy Upton
3051 Brown's Lane
Soquel, CA 95073