

Update of the Broadcast Spraying of Herbicides on Hwy 84 and Beyond

by *Lynnette Vega*



A number of local individuals attended a "Java with Jerry" on November 21st, 2015 in Pescadero with State Senator Jerry Hill, handing him 540 petition signatures to stop the broadcast spraying of herbicides by Caltrans along our roads and watershed. Caltrans broadcast sprays 2 or 3 times a year on State roads, including Highways 84, 35, 1, 92 and 280. With Senator Hill and Assemblyman Rich Gordon's support, in addition to a strong public response, Caltrans has said that they're not planning to implement their broadcast spraying program along Hwy 84 -- for the time being. Caltrans has claimed that the herbicides won't run off into our watershed streams, however given the torrential rains that we've experienced over the past couple of months, herbicide runoff into our waterways seems likely, if not certain. Caltrans are no longer using Roundup, but are using chemicals that have the same glyphosate composition. Below is an excerpt from Gidget Navarro of Caltrans public affairs office dated Jan. 19, 2016 to local residents:

"Caltrans is further assessing our operations to figure out what changes we can implement. As of this time, there is no set date for further spraying. In the event spraying is to occur on State Route 84, we will provide timely advance notice to all interested parties."

La Honda residents led the effort to end broadcast herbicide spraying on San Mateo County roads. In 2012, the SMC Board of Supervisors passed a resolution ending this, *(continued on pg. 3)*

Herbicide Spraying *(continued from page 1)*

...yet Caltrans continues to spray on the State roads. Our voices have made a difference! Last year we organized as Protect Our Watershed San Mateo County (POW SMC) to continue our work. What we need to affect change is more community voices telling our elected officials to request that Caltrans end broadcast spraying here, as they have to mow anyway for vegetation management! Mowing is most effective for visibility, fire protection and road safety without the toxic risks to our public health and watershed. Caltrans has done this already in many other counties in California. Marin County and Topanga Canyon are two of many areas where Caltrans manages vegetation without broadcast spraying. **The important thing is that if we want Caltrans to change, pressure from the community can't let up for a second.**

Here are some things that community members can do to support the "no spray" effort:

- sign the "no spray" petition at www.ProtectOurWatershed.org. You can also add your name to our email list to be informed about any changes (from the County or Caltrans) that might affect our area.
- while Caltrans has said that they don't have plans to spray, if you do see them spraying, take pictures and note the date, time and location (in the past they have ignored signs that say "No Spray"). Let us know by calling (650) 815-9115 or go to our contact page www.ProtectOurWatershed.org.
- write State Senator Jerry Hill (senator.hill@senate.ca.gov), Assemblyman Gordon (<http://asmc.org/members/a24/>) and Gidget Navarro (gidget.navarro@dot.ca.gov) from Caltrans Public Affairs to thank them for their attention to this issue and to urge them to end Caltrans' broadcast herbicide spraying in San Mateo County.