



August 28, 2015

Bijan Sartipi, District Director
Caltrans District 4
111 Grand Avenue
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Broadcast spraying with herbicides in San Mateo County

Dear Mr. Sartipi,

On behalf of Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, I am writing to request that Caltrans work collaboratively with interested stakeholders and government officials to institute mowing and other alternatives to broadcast spraying with herbicides with mowing along State Highways in San Mateo County.

Our mission is to create a healthy community, environment, and economy through bicycling for people who live, work, or play in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Many of our 2,800 members enjoy bicycling along State Routes 1, 35, 84, and 92 where there is often limited space between the travel way/bike route and the edge of the road. Current spraying practices can create plant material that a bicyclist must veer into the roadway to avoid, creating a potentially dangerous situation. We strongly support best practices to control weeds, improve safety and visibility, and improve fire safety along these highways. To that end, we strongly support sustainable solutions including mechanical mowing and brushing of vegetation with spot application of herbicides where absolutely necessary. This will help ensure that people who bike, and other users of the road, have the healthiest possible environment.

Other agencies, including your own, have already opted to discontinue spraying. In 2012, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors terminated broadcast spraying of herbicides along County-maintained roads. The County's reasons included concerns regarding impacts on health of residents and visitors, health of the County's sensitive habitats including wetlands, streams, and watersheds, and protection of wildlife species, particularly endangered species. In 2013, the Topanga Canyon Boulevard partners announced a landmark agreement with Caltrans to use mowers and other mechanical tools instead of herbicides, to remove brush and other vegetation along State Route 27 in Topanga Canyon.

We commend these decisions to implement sustainable solutions that promote public safety for all users of the highways while protecting the natural environment. We urge Caltrans to implement a similar program in San Mateo County.

Sincerely,

Shiloh Ballard
President and Executive Director

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