



April 15, 2015

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

Re: Roadside Spraying by Caltrans on State Highways 1, 35, 84, 92, in San Mateo County

Dear Bijan,

I was recently talking with Lennie Roberts from the Committee for Green Foothills regarding Caltrans' practice of broadcast spraying of herbicides along the six State Highways in San Mateo County to control the vegetation growth along the roadside for both public safety and fire protection. As I was considering the issue, it occurred to me that controlling the vegetation along these state highways is not too dissimilar to the District's maintenance brushing of vegetation along trails and roadways in District Open Space Preserves. The District completes this maintenance activity solely with mechanical mowing, with spot application of herbicides only for invasive vegetation control or cut stump treatment of woody vegetation. I would like to encourage Caltrans to adopt similar methods along state highways bordering District Open Space Preserves.

This practice is consistent with San Mateo County's maintenance practices as well, where the County has terminated broadcast spraying of herbicides along County-maintained roads. The County's reasons for eliminating broadcast spraying 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. District lands provide habitat for 160 sensitive plant and animal species and the protection of these is at the center of the District's Mission.

Thank you for considering this request to shift Caltrans' roadside vegetation management practices to be more in line with the District's practices on District Open Space Preserves. I do not make this request lightly; I understand the enormous task it is to maintain facilities and would not make this request if I did not believe it was doable and the very best stewardship for the environment.

Sincerely,

Stephen E. Abbors, General Manager

cc: MROSD Board of Directors
Committee for Green Foothills