

NEWS FROM OUR DIRECTOR

protectourwatershed.org/news-from-our-director.html

FROM PATTY MAYALL:

10-20-2017

From: "Weiss, Jeffrey A@DOT" <Jeffrey.Weiss@dot.ca.gov>

Date: Oct 2, 2017 10:23 AM

Subject: Herbicide Spraying in San Mateo County

To: "kbradshaw@embarcaderopublishing.com" <kbradshaw@embarcaderopublishing.com>,

Cc: "Mccauley, Myeast@DOT" <myeast.mccauley@dot.ca.gov>

Hi Kate & Patty,

I'm Jeff Weiss, the new Public Information Officer for San Mateo County –replacing Gidget who left in January. I'm sending answers to Patty's questions which were condensed by Kate who sent them to me. The questions addressed herbicide spraying along Interstate 280.

Let me know if you have other questions.

Thanks!

Jeff Weiss

Caltrans Public Affairs (510) 286-5543

Below are condensed/incomplete answers and questions that POW submitted regarding spraying on I-280 on 09/13/17 and photographed by Patty Mayall.



Was it a herbicide spraying?

Yes, it was herbicide spraying

What was being sprayed?

Caltrans crews were spraying glyphosate

Where and where was it being sprayed, and how much?

In September, in San Mateo County, Caltrans has sprayed 80% of I-280 and 40% of Highway 101. All spraying was performed within limits ascribed by the federal and state environmental protection agencies.

Caltrans sprayed to keep an adequate fire barrier between the road and the brush and also to control stinkwort, an invasive plant that has more and more prevalent.

It's important to kill the stinkwort now because it drops its seeds in the fall. Mowing at this time would only spread the seeds far and wide.

Does Caltrans post warning when they spray a known carcinogen along roadsides to warn walkers, bicyclists, motorcyclists and people riding in convertibles or walking pets of the presence of the listed substance?

Caltrans is complying with Prop 65.

We are not required to post a warning. As a practical matter, work crews jumping in and out of vehicles to post signs on a freeway is far more hazardous than the presence of glyphosate.

If the glyphosate is sprayed on a calm day, which it was on the day Patty took the picture, then the spray will not drift onto the roadway. Also, glyphosate quickly binds with the soil, making the chemical in the herbicide inert.

Are there current plans for herbicide spraying on SMC Highways 280, 84, 35 and 1?

Caltrans has plans to spray along these routes but has not defined the timetable or the exact areas that will be sprayed.

From: patty mayall

Date: Tue, Oct 17, 2017 at 7:12 PM

Subject: Re: Herbicide Spraying in San Mateo County

To: "Weiss, Jeffrey A@DOT" <Jeffrey.Weiss@dot.ca.gov>

Cc: Joan Dentler <joan.dentler@sen.ca.gov>, Louis Morrone <louis.morrone@asm.ca.gov>, Bijan Sartipi <bijan.sartipi@dot.ca.gov>

Greetings Jeff,

Thank you for your email. I had hoped to hear back from you after leaving my voice messages so that we could discuss this crucial issue for our community over many years.

On behalf of Protect Our Watershed SMC and after meeting with my Advisors, I am writing to address these points, some of which are in your attached document :

1. We request that Caltrans NOT broadcast spray herbicides along SMC Hwys. 84 and 35 which are within our communities where our water sources exist often adjacent to these roads, where the drainage ditches empty onto our properties and into our local creeks and watershed. Our significant concerns have been documented, over 10 years, in many letters, phone calls, and hundreds of petition signatures.

Please visit our website which documents our experiences with this issue
: www.protectourwatershed.org

2. Posted warnings had been assured to us in the past and can be given with electronic message boards prior to and during spraying. As a matter of public health, we do not understand Caltrans' resistance to warning the public of toxic chemical exposure which broadcast herbicide spraying imposes. This email assured us that residents and businesses would be notified prior to spraying :

From: Navarro, Gidget R@DOT

Date: Thu, Nov 10, 2016 at 2:46 PM

Subject: RE: SMC Roadside Spraying schedule

To: patty mayall

Cc: "Haus, Robert@DOT"

Good afternoon Ms. Mayall,

Thank you for your email regarding herbicide spraying in San Mateo County,

Caltrans does not have scheduled spraying planned for Routes 84, 35 & 1 at this time.

We will notify residents and businesses prior to spraying.

Thanks again for your patience and have a great weekend.

*Gidget Navarro
Caltrans Public Affairs
Public Information Officer
San Mateo County
510-286-5574 (office)
510-715-8770 (cell)*

3. Regarding No Spray signs being honored by Caltrans, please let us know if this has changed. If so, then Caltrans needs to publicize this immediately for people to know that they must enter a legal agreement with Caltrans in order to protect their properties.

We understand that this legal agreement also requires the resident to maintain the vegetation along their roadside properties which is not possible for many residents and can be extremely dangerous. They are simply trying to protect their homes from this potential toxic chemical contamination.

With past confusion on this issue with Caltrans, we were assured that No Spray signs would be honored :

https://www.almanacnews.com/news/2015/10/23/more-groups-ask-caltrans-to-stop-spraying-herbicides-in-san-mateo-county#comment_form

"Ms. Navarro said Caltrans will also continue to honor residents' "No Spray" signs. She said Caltrans will not spray with 25 feet of driveways in areas where complaints have been received, or within 25 feet of groups of mailboxes or of creeks and waterways."

4. Regarding the broadcast herbicide spraying on Hwy. 280 for the invasive plant, Stinkwort : we encourage using additional methods of control which have been documented and using less toxic methods. Many invasive plants build resistance to chemicals, which might be part of the problem on I-280. Caltrans has been broadcast spraying 2-3 times a year, over many years, and yet Stinkwort is thriving and more widespread there. Re-vegetation with native plants is necessary, as experts advise. Broadcast spraying herbicides kills ALL plants in the path of spraying, along with poisoning pollinators and risking contamination of watershed areas.

<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/12-ways-to-get-rid-of-aggressive-weeds-without-resorting-to-roundup.html>

In our community, many people are working on removing invasive plant species without toxic chemicals, or with targeted use of chemicals, or using effective alternatives. We have been willing to work with Caltrans, yet the threat of continued broadcast spraying along Hwys. 84

and 35, our No Spray signs not being honored, and our concerns being ignored does not help to build a "working relationship".

We appreciate and commend Caltrans for all the difficult and crucial work to maintain our roadways. We may disagree on some of the issues here, yet we want to reach an agreement that might work for all us. Please consider our requests and provide answers to our questions.

With gratitude,

Patty Mayall

Director, Protect Our Watershed San Mateo County

----- Forwarded message -----

From: patty mayall

Date: Fri, Oct 20, 2017 at 12:25 PM

Subject: FREE No Spray Signs Sat. 10/21 at LH event !

To: Patty Mayall

Greetings All,

I will have laminated No Spray signs on wooden posts for anyone living along Hwys. 84, 35, and 1, free for you to post NOW as Caltrans is spraying Hwy. 280, and according to their document attached "Caltrans has plans to spray along these routes but has not defined the timetable or the exact areas..." **

For signs, Please see me tomorrow after

The Coffee and Conversation with Senator Hill & Assemblym. Berman

Sat., 10/21 10--11 am

La Honda Elementary, 450 Sears Ranch Rd., La Honda

Voice your concerns and questions on this and any issues! Please attend and help us spread the word on this first time big event in our community.

**Below is my letter in response to that document. I will keep you posted as we work on this with Caltrans and most importantly, with our legislators above who could end this.

We need your voices NOW on this issue to prevent another (unnecessary) toxic chemical broadcast spraying in our community !

Please post No Spray signs along your properties this weekend. If you cannot attend this event, then contact me and I will get signs to you.

With gratitude,
Patty Mayall

Director, Protect Our Watershed San Mateo County

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