



CALIFORNIA  
ASSOCIATION  
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GROWERS

## **Pest Management & Politics**

Last month the California Department of Pesticide Regulation recommended new interim restrictions on the use of chlorpyrifos. DPR recommends that county ag commissioners begin implementing the interim measures on January 1, 2019.

The interim measures include:

- Banning all aerial applications of chlorpyrifos.
- Discontinuing its use on most crops.
- Requiring a quarter-mile buffer zone during all allowed applications of the pesticide and for 24 hours afterwards.
- Requiring a 150-foot setback from houses, businesses, schools and other sensitive sites at all times, regardless of whether the site is occupied at the time of application.

Below is a timeline on DPR's actions relative to chlorpyrifos:

- In 2015, DPR designated chlorpyrifos a California restricted material.
- In 2017, chlorpyrifos was added to the Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to cause cancer or birth defects or other reproductive harm.
- In September 2018, DPR proposed designating chlorpyrifos as a "toxic air contaminant." A 45-day public comment period on the proposed designation closed on November 9.

DPR is currently in the midst of a two-year process to determine what permanent mitigation measures are needed.

In the meantime, the Legislature is likely to consider a total ban on chlorpyrifos. Lawmakers will also probably explore banning the use of neonicotinoids. The nonprofit group Beyond Pesticides recently reported that neonicotinoids not only pose a threat to bees, but to aquatic species as well.

Roundup is also a potential target for legislative action. This summer Monsanto lost a jury trial case where a groundskeeper was awarded \$78 million. Jurors found that Monsanto acted with "malice" and that its weed killers Roundup and Ranger Pro contributed "substantially" to the groundkeeper's cancer.

Nonprofits like Beyond Pesticides, Environmental Working Group, the Sierra Club and others are expected to point to these recent developments and sponsor legislation in 2019 to restrict or ban the use of these chemicals.

Debate on this type of legislation is often filled with hyperbole. It is then up to scientists and ag groups to help create a fully informed debate over this important public policy. The inevitable problem is that misinformation about chemicals is repeated over and over again, and far too often the facts just get lost.

Such is the politics of pest management.

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