



***Matteel Environmental Justice
Foundation***

March 20, 2023

The Honorable Alex Lee

Chair, Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials

1020 N Street, Room 171
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 99 (Connolly) – Support

Dear Chair Lee,

We, the undersigned, on behalf of our membership and supporters, write in support of Assembly Bill 99 and its requirement that the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) adopt a statewide policy for integrated pest management (IPM) for pest control, particularly vegetation management, in the right of ways of state roads and highways within each county that adopts such policies and that Caltrans personnel who work in vegetation management be trained in IPM.

We work throughout the northwestern state and are based in the counties located within Caltrans District 1, which is composed of Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino and Lake counties, where we have maintained oversight and advocacy for our members and the general public regarding toxic materials, forestry practices, active transportation, conservation, natural resources, wildlife and related subjects for several decades.

For the last thirty-four years, Caltrans has not used herbicides and pesticides in the counties of Humboldt and Mendocino and greatly reduced the amount used in the counties of Del Norte and

Lake. These counties have within their borders areas identified by State authorities as among the most hazardous wildfire environments in California. They also contain multiple-lane freeways and winding two-lane highways that traverse through mountainous terrain, all with vegetation management challenges equal to almost any in California's highway right of ways. In these many years we have not been made aware of, observed or heard of complications, impacts to safety including traffic accidents and issues relating to wildfire or the spread of invasive plants resulting from the practice of non-chemical roadside vegetation management in District 1. It is our observation that vegetation control as practiced in District 1 for more three and a half decades can largely be adopted safely and effectively throughout the state.

Despite the example demonstrated by District 1, in 2023 Caltrans used 422,812 pounds of herbicides on roadsides in fifty-three counties, a staggering amount of toxic chemicals discharged by California into its environment to put at risk wildlife and human populations. It also represents an alarming increase over previous years.

For these reasons, we believe that it is established that Caltrans can and should begin the path of using IPM on its 130,000 acres of roadside right of ways as envisioned in AB 99.

Patricia Clary, Executive Director
Californians for Alternatives to Toxics

Colin Fiske, Executive Director
Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities

Matthew Simmons, Staff Attorney
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William Verick, Director
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Kimberly Baker, Executive Director
Klamath Forest Alliance

CC: The Honorable Damon Connolly, California State Assembly
Members, Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials