

CA brings the heat on methyl iodide

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The carcinogenic [strawberry pesticide, methyl iodide](#), continues to make [news](#). A farm in the California Central Valley recently became the fourth in the state to apply the [fumigant](#), prompting tens of thousands of Californians to rattle Governor Jerry Brown's cage, again. This time, they're joined by 38 California legislators, who wrote a letter to Brown urging him "to take immediate action to prohibit the use of methyl iodide in California."

As the [letter](#) from the state legislature points out,

Extensive scientific analyses have been conducted on methyl iodide and scientists have overwhelmingly concluded that the adverse health and environmental risks to public, worker, and environmental safety associated with this chemical are significant. Methyl iodide is a known carcinogen (Proposition 65 list), neurotoxin, and mutagen... According to the chair of the Scientific Review Committee, Dr. John Froines, "there is no safe level of use for methyl iodide."

Earlier this spring Brown promised to "[take a fresh look](#)" at the Schwarzenegger Administration's controversial decision to approve methyl iodide for agricultural use in California despite a clear message from the state's own independent Scientific Review Committee that the chemical has no safe place in agriculture.

Methyl iodide has long been used in industrial laboratories, in tiny amounts and with significant protective gear. Among its uses: inducing cancer in cells. If used in agriculture as a [fumigant](#), methyl iodide would be pumped as a gas at rates of over 100 lbs per acre into the soil. The chemical is volatile, likely to contaminate ground water, and — in addition to being known to the state of California to cause cancer — methyl iodide is a thyroid toxicant linked to spontaneous miscarriages.

Fumigant season is upon us in California. Without immediate action by the Brown administration, the number of farms using methyl iodide in this state will quickly move from four to 40 and more, in part because California grows more than 80% of the nation's strawberries.

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[Keep the heat on](#) » PAN joins allies including [Change.org](#) in a nation-wide effort to [write to Gov. Brown and urge him to reverse the approval of methyl iodide](#) before it is too late. Thank you for adding your voice to the swell!

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