

Buffer zones: Just common sense

Jul 12, 2012 by Pesticide Action Network



Living in a lush, forested area sounds pristine and serene, right? Yes, but you may have to grapple with pesticide drift from periodic aerial spraying of herbicides like [2,4-D](#) and [atrazine](#).

Residents of Lane County, Oregon are fed up. They recently organized a rally [protesting](#) this long-standing practice, and calling for buffer zones to protect their communities.

The pesticides being sprayed tend to drift on air currents and have been found in the blood and urine of numerous residents who've been [tested](#). Aerial application of herbicides is widespread throughout forested areas of Oregon and [other states](#). Large tracts of forest, however, have been managed successfully for years in the state without the use of herbicides.

Oregon has [enacted buffer zones](#) restricting pesticide use around streams and rivers to protect salmon and endangered species. However, no such buffer zones exist near schools or residences. According to Christina Hubbard from the grassroots group Forest Web:

Really what this is about is creating a reasonable buffer zone for aerial spraying. This is common sense, to protect homes and schools.

In [California](#), 1/4 mile buffer zones around schools were put in place in two of the state's agricultural counties (Tulare and Kern) when local residents documented contamination in school air using [PAN's Drift Catcher](#). The communities worked closely with [Californians for Pesticide Reform](#) to mount an effective campaign and win the protective buffer zones.

Hazards blowing in the wind

Among the herbicides of concern in Oregon are atrazine and 2,4-D. [Atrazine](#) is a hormone disruptor and has been shown to have links to reproductive harm, while the weedkiller [2,4-D](#) has been linked to cancer, lowered sperm counts, birth defects and neurological damage among other serious health harms.

PAN and other groups have been calling upon the EPA to follow independent science on the harms of these pesticides, despite [efforts from the pesticide industry](#) to minimize the health risks.

Dow — one of the [Big 6](#) global pesticide corporations — has been pushing back against attempts to

Buffer zones: Just common sense

Published on Pesticide Action Network (<http://www.panna.org>)

more strictly regulate 2,4-D, and has applied to USDA for approval of a new genetically modified line of corn that would be [resistant to the herbicide](#). Over 70 [scientists and health practitioners](#) recently wrote to USDA protesting the proposed new use for this dangerous herbicide.

Kudos to the people of Oregon for calling for common sense protections from pesticide spray.

Source URL: <http://www.panna.org/blog/buffer-zones-just-common-sense>