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**NEWS RELEASE**

**Kids' Health & Farming Advocates Urge Governor to Adopt  
'Healthy Children & Green Jobs' Platform**

*If Governor Schwarzenegger Approves Cancer-Causing Strawberry Pesticide in December,  
Brown Administration's First Step Must Be to Listen to Science and Ban Methyl Iodide*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—Today, a diverse coalition of farmworker, children's health, farm, and environmental groups released their priorities for the incoming Brown administration. *Healthy Children & Green Jobs: A Platform for Pesticide Reform* lays out scientifically-grounded, public health-protective priorities for protecting children's health and supporting healthy, safe and climate-friendly agriculture and pest management in California. With the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) poised to make a decision on cancer-causing strawberry pesticide methyl iodide in December, the Californians for Pesticide Reform coalition urges the outgoing Schwarzenegger administration to deny approval of the pesticide in California.

"The science is in. Methyl iodide is used to *create* cancer cells in labs, it causes late term miscarriages and it's a water contaminant," said Tracey Brieger, Co-Director of Californians for Pesticide Reform. "Scientists have said repeatedly that there's no safe way to use this chemical in the fields. Approving it as a pesticide would be the wrong thing to do."

Advocates are calling specifically on DPR Director Mary-Ann Warmerdam to listen to the science and deny the registration of cancer-causing methyl iodide in the state. Over 50,000 Californians and dozens of scientists, including six Nobel Laureates in Chemistry, concluded that the chemical was too toxic for use in agriculture. Experts cite many reasons for prohibiting the use of methyl iodide, including higher health care costs and lost work time for farmworkers and people in neighboring communities, as well as the cost to clean-up local water supplies that may be contaminated if methyl iodide is approved.

If the outgoing Schwarzenegger administration decides to let corporate pressure trump the science and approves this dangerous pesticide in its last few weeks in office, advocates are calling on Governor Brown to reopen the decision immediately and ban methyl iodide in California.

"Methyl iodide is unnecessary and would be a health disaster for farm workers and people living near strawberry fields in rural communities and suburbs," said Dr. Susan Kegley, Consulting Scientist at Pesticide Action Network North America. "By preventing the use of methyl iodide and supporting sustainable and organic alternatives, Governor Brown can protect public health, create green agricultural jobs and help California farmers keep the agricultural economy strong into the

future.”

In addition to taking a stand on methyl iodide, the coalition of groups has outlined a series of recommendations for the incoming Brown Administration to reduce pesticide use in *Healthy Children & Green Jobs: A Platform for Pesticide Reform*.

“Governor Brown has a unique opportunity to set California on the right course by harnessing the power of agriculture and green jobs,” said Paul Towers, State Director of Pesticide Watch Education Fund. “Investing in healthy children and healthy farms will pay dividends for years to come.”

The platform calls for Governor Brown to take leadership that will:

**Make agricultural jobs greener.** Organic agriculture is an economic engine in California, with over 3,500 organic farms and 150,000 acres in organic production. California was an early leader in green farming opportunities and organic agriculture, but now lags behind the Midwest when it comes to policy and research support for organic. Chemicals like methyl iodide place a sustainable and organic agricultural economy in further jeopardy and drive up health costs. With one-in-ten of the state’s jobs in agriculture, we can’t afford a mistake. Governor Brown should eliminate methyl iodide within the first month in office to make agricultural jobs greener.

**Protect children’s health.** We rely on the next generation of Californians to lead the state towards prosperity. Unless we protect children’s health from toxic pesticides linked to disease and disability at home, schools and farms, we place that future in jeopardy. Governor Brown should support policies that will help create a dynamic industry around green pest management that protects children’s health.

**Address climate change through agriculture.** Californians sent a clear message on November 2<sup>nd</sup> when they overwhelmingly rejected Proposition 23, and urged the state to continue on its path to address the problems of climate change. Healthy agriculture builds the soil, sequestering carbon and reducing nitrous oxide emissions – two potent contributors to climate change. In an 8-year study in California, soils managed organically contained significantly higher carbon content that was not released as a greenhouse gas. Governor Brown should work to increase the number of and support for climate-friendly organic farms that reduce greenhouse gas emissions by sequestering carbon and are resilient in the face of environmental threats such as increased pest pressures that may result from climate change.

Californians for Pesticide Reform is a statewide coalition of over 185 public interest groups dedicated to protecting human health and the environment from pesticide use. Today, the coalition is releasing its policy brief for the Brown Administration, *Healthy Children & Green Jobs: A Platform for Pesticide Reform*, simultaneously in eight cities across the state: Sacramento, San Francisco, Fresno, Oxnard, Bakersfield, Santa Cruz, Chico and Redding.

*Healthy Children & Green Jobs: A Platform for Pesticide Reform* can be downloaded at [www.PesticideReform.org](http://www.PesticideReform.org).

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