

Thank you for meeting with us!

External

Inbox



Yanely Martinez <yanely@pestidereform.org> Sep 12, 2025,
1:27 PM

to David, graham.hunting, Pedro, Erika, Kathleen, Rocio, Omar, yovanna, lt7450, me,
edwinpadillagarcia38@gmail.com

Dear Commissioner Sanford and Deputy Commissioner Hunting,

Thank you for taking generous time to hear some of our concerns about pesticides in Santa Cruz County last Friday.

Today is the 12th day of Omar Dieguez's hunger strike, calling for growers to use organic farming methods near Pajaro Valley Schools.

We appreciate that you believe safer alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides are "moving faster," but as public health nurse Erika Alfaro commented, "Let's not wait."

We brought three issues to our discussion: fumigants, methomyl, and indigenous language access for farmworkers. We've attached letters to you regarding fumigants and methomyl.

On fumigants, we expressed our concerns for the extremely high density and disproportionate use near Pajaro Valley Schools. We also made two requests: a) that you consider expanding the current 1/4-mile pesticide buffer zones around schools to 1/2-mile, and b) that you reach out to the Department of Pesticide Regulation to begin pilot programs incentivizing organic farming within the school buffer zones. Our understanding on the buffer zone expansion was that you said you needed "a lot more information," and we trust you will seek that (and we'd be happy to address any questions). We were pleased to hear that you plan to discuss the pilot project for organic zones around schools with colleagues next month.

Regarding our concerns about methomyl (a pesticide banned in 50 countries that is a cholinesterase inhibitor, which a recent CHAMACOS study found correlated to heavy menstrual

bleeding in Latina teens), we requested that the Ag Commissioner's office require field signs warning pregnant mothers of potential dangers from exposure. You explained that there have been few applications (around 35) and that none have been within the school buffer zones. Kathleen Kilpatrick offered to help design a sign. We believe you are open to reviewing such a sign for use.

Following up on our previous discussions over the challenges indigenous farmworkers face in getting information and being trained in safety measures about pesticides, we requested you contact CBDIO for expert help and advice. You told us about your office's February outreach to 200 farmworkers and noted again that by law growers must train workers in their own languages. We believe fact sheets and training materials produced by your office in conjunction with the expertise of CBDIO and/or Proyecto Mixteco would be a benefit to indigenous workers. While she was unable to attend last week's meeting, Sarait Martinez (sarait@centrobinacional.org), the Executive Director of CBDIO, told us she would be happy to discuss these language access issues with you.

Please let us know if your understanding of our discussions is different.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Yanely Martinez
Central Coast Organizing Coordinator