

**SMART PLANNING - THE INVASIVES VISION PROCESS:
AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO CDFA STATEWIDE PEST
PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (PEIR)**

What is the Statewide Pest PEIR?

In the proposed Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) plans to evaluate statewide prevention and control of current and future pests. According to CDFA, the PEIR will be structured around pest treatment methods, for all current and future pests, anywhere in the state of California. CDFA's attorney states the intent of the PEIR is to allow “*rapid response*” to pests and to “*do such a thorough analysis that we don't need additional environmental review when a particular pest is detected.*”

In short, the Pest PEIR is intended to give advance approval for toxic treatments on short notice for unknown future pests, anywhere in the state.

Why is CDFA pursuing a Pest PEIR?

CDFA says the PEIR is their tool for planning for combating invasive species in California.

In a nutshell, what's wrong with the Statewide Pest PEIR?

The PEIR will lock in for decades to come the state's outdated approach to invasive pests, which has not changed since the notorious Medfly aerial malathion spraying in the 1970s. For more than 30 years, the state has been quarantining farmers, spraying pesticides, and using other pest control methods that:

- Endanger ecosystems and public health by wide-area repeated pesticide sprays and other disruptive treatments.¹
- Burden our farmers, particularly small, organic farmers.²
- Are costly,³ ineffective,⁴ and not based on current science.

Why is the Statewide Pest PEIR NOT a good planning tool?

- **Based upon outdated, reactive, chemically intensive pest management methods:** The PEIR is not about “pest prevention” as its name implies but about legally sanctioning the outdated “quarantine & spray approach,” which creates chemical-intensive programs like the light brown apple moth (LBAM) program.⁵
- **Shortchanges Public Participation:** A pest treatment approved in the PEIR could be applied many years later in a community, anywhere in the state, without any opportunity for that community to have input.
- **Marginalizes stakeholder, public & scientific evidence:** Despite overwhelming contrary scientific evidence, courts must, under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), grant *agency deference* to CDFA's opinion.⁶
- **Legally Unsupported:**
 - The Pest PEIR mirrors CDFA's apple moth PEIR, which is currently being challenged in 2 lawsuits for being structured around individual treatment methods that might be used in combination and for a broad (statewide) scope and indefinite time frame.

¹ Insect eradication programs are often intentionally designed to create a virtual cloud of chemicals over large areas of land (including schools and private homes) over a period of several years. Agricultural areas are also routinely sprayed or permeated with pesticides for insect eradication and control programs. This means that children, pregnant women, elderly and other vulnerable populations are exposed to chemicals chronically for long periods and in a variety of ways. This exposure is in addition to the pesticide exposure occurring from typical agricultural and household pesticide use.

² 40% of the state was under quarantine for 8 pests in 2010. (Western Farm Press, 8/29/10) One farmer reported loss of \$40,000 from quarantine-related shutdowns in summer 2009. (Testimony to the Senate Agricultural Committee, 2009)

³ A recent CDFA pest program for the light brown apple moth has cost \$18M in state funds & \$97M in federal funds to date.

⁴ Since 1982, CDFA has undertaken 274 annual “emergency eradication” projects for the same 9 insects. (Data provided by former CDFA Sec. A.G. Kawamura)

⁵ Approx. 80% of the PEIR funding comes from funds for current pest programs for the Asian citrus psyllid and European grapevine moth; both programs require the use of chemicals that are highly toxic to fish, aquatic life, and bees.

⁶ Laurel Heights Improvement Assn. v. Regents of University of California, (1988) 47 Cal. 3d 376 (764 P.2d 278; 253 Cal.Rptr. 426).

- Multiple CEQA attorneys advise that it will be impossible to evaluate all potential impacts from pest treatments on health and wildlife in all communities and ecosystems across the state.
- **Too expensive:** The estimated budget for the PEIR is \$3 – 4.5 million (likely an underestimate; a comparably scoped PEIR for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission cost \$11 million; the LBAM PEIR, for 1 insect, cost \$2 million).
- **Too broad:** A blanket statewide PEIR cannot possibly acknowledge all effects on the various California ecosystems; California encompasses more endangered ecosystems than any other state, from the desert to mountains to bay delta, and is home to 6 of the 7 world climates.

Is There An Alternative Approach?

Yes: Smart Planning – The Invasives Vision Process:

- The Invasives Vision Process (IS Vision) is a newer, smarter, more effective, less expensive, and less toxic approach to invasive species based upon up-to-date science.
- IS Vision is modeled upon the successful 2007 – 2010 Agricultural Visioning Process.⁷
- Like the Agricultural Visioning process, IS Vision would bring together stakeholders and public to update the state's approach to invasive species.

What are the Benefits of the Invasives Vision Process?

- **Incorporates Modern Invasive Pest Research:** IS Vision would take advantage of *current research by UC Davis scientists*⁸ to re-envision the invasive species paradigm to make the state's approach:
 - (1) more cost- and resource-efficient.
 - (2) more effective in preventing physical damage from pests.
 - (3) more effective at satisfying economic and trade concerns.
 - (4) less burdensome and disruptive to farmers.
 - (5) less dependent on widespread chemical intervention and thus more acceptable to the public.
- **Considers Current Pesticide & Health Research:** IS Vision would meaningfully incorporate new research on health and environmental effects of pesticides, which shows adverse effects from small doses, low-level chronic and in-utero exposures, impacts on vulnerable populations, toxicity to pollinators, etc.
- **Less expensive:** IS Vision is expected to cost taxpayers \$300,000 + agency staff time (based upon cost of Agricultural Vision Process) vs. \$3 – 4.5 million budgeted for the PEIR.
- **Supports Healthy Farms:** A renewed and up-to-date approach to statewide pest control is consistent with a statewide transition to sustainable agriculture practices.
- **Less burdensome for farmers:** Eliminates the “quarantine & spray” approach, protecting farmers from damaging inspections, shutdowns, and forced chemical treatments.
- **Consensus process:** Guided by stakeholders rather than top down by state agency; less likely to result in legal challenges.
- **Does not require a legal process for updates:** Unlike a PEIR, a planning document is flexible and can incorporate new research. Amending a PEIR is a costly legal process that can only be updated by the authoring agency.

Contacts:

Paul S. Towers, Pesticide Watch – 916-216-1082

Nan Wishner, Stop the Spray East Bay – 510-524-5185

Debbie Friedman, MOMS Advocating Sustainability (MOMAS) – 415-608-8317

⁷ Carried out by American Farmland Trust for CDFA. The “Ag Vision” report calls for “research on new low-impact solutions” to address invasive species.

⁸ Zalom, F., J. Carey, M. Parella. 2011. Toward a 21st-century invasive pest policy: Reconceiving the strategic framework. Workshop Prospectus.