

OPPOSE

LD 228 – An Act To Revise Notification Requirements for Pesticide Application

Sponsor: Representative Peter Edgecomb

Co-sponsors: Representatives CLARK of Easton, GIFFORD of Lincoln, and Senator SHERMAN of Aroostook

Summary: This bill repeals the laws that govern the development and maintenance of a pesticide notification registry that allows individuals to request to be received advance notification of agricultural aerial spraying of pesticides.

Explanation: Under current law, Maine citizens have the right to sign up for a registry that lets them know when farmers will spray crops with toxic pesticides from aircraft or air blasters (air blasters are like snow guns for pesticides). Mainers should continue to have the right to take simple precautions such as closing their windows or leaving their houses, when people spray chemicals from airplanes or powerful guns on the ground.

As of late January, more than 1,600 people had enrolled in the pesticide notification registry, demonstrating strong public interest in advance notification. Unfortunately, there has been significant misinformation about Maine's pesticide notification requirements. Governor LePage, for example, has mistakenly claimed that farmers were required to notify neighbors 90 days in advance of spraying, including potato farmers who face a short season. This is not accurate; there is no 90-day advance notification requirement. The rules for pesticide notification only require those entities required to provide notification to consult the registry to determine who would like to be notified within a week of spraying.

Participants in the registry receive a notice of pesticide applications made within 1,320 feet of their properties, although the limit is 500 feet for fruit trees, Christmas trees and nonagricultural spraying, such as for ticks, mosquitoes and tree pests. LD 228 would eliminate this requirement, and would eliminate the opportunity for concerned Maine citizens to take precautions in advance of pesticide spraying near their homes.

NRCM opposes LD 228.