

# SB 759

## INGREDIENTS IN AERIAL PESTICIDES

### SENATOR MARK LENO

Californians who live and work in communities that are exposed to pesticides – especially aerial pesticides sprayed from a helicopter or plane – face a well-documented risk of developing a broad array of acute and long-term adverse health conditions. Public health agencies and emergency responders in these areas must, at the very least, be provided with a complete list of every chemical contained in these products. Yet currently pesticide manufacturers shield the ingredients they use from public disclosure, forcing the first responders in our communities to operate in the dark.

Federal regulations only require pesticide manufacturers to freely disclose those chemicals in their products that are classified as “active” ingredients. Yet manufacturers have succeeded in narrowing its application to the point where it’s become essentially meaningless. As a result, they routinely classify the majority of the ingredients in their pesticides as “inert”, which by law they may refuse to disclose to the public.

#### HIDDEN FROM THE LIGHT OF DAY

In some cases, more than 99% of the ingredients in pesticides are designated inert and kept hidden from the light of day. But the distinction between active and inert ingredients is entirely arbitrary: more than 500 ingredients that have been classified as inert have also been or are currently used as active ingredients.

As the U.S. EPA itself has pointed out, “many consumers have a misleading impression of the term ‘inert ingredient,’ believing it to mean water or other harmless ingredients”, when in fact the compound “may have biological activity of its own, it may be toxic to humans, and it may be chemically active”. Recent research has shown that so-called “inert” ingredients may increase the toxicity of pesticides to developing nervous systems, cause genetic damage, and disrupt the normal function of hormonal systems.

#### TIMELY ACCESS TO COMPLETE LISTS OF THE INGREDIENTS IN PESTICIDES

Co-sponsored by Center for Environmental Health and Pesticide Watch, SB 759 seeks to provide public health agencies and emergency responders with timely access to complete lists of all the ingredients in aerial pesticides, many of which pose serious health and environmental risks.

#### SPONSORS

Center for Environmental Health  
Pesticide Watch

#### STAFF CONTACT

Zak Meyer-Krings, Legislative Assistant  
Senator Mark Leno  
(916) 651-4003  
[zak.meyer-krings@sen.ca.gov](mailto:zak.meyer-krings@sen.ca.gov)

#### STATUS

Dual-referred to the Senate Committee on  
Health & the Senate Committee on  
Environmental Quality.