



Natural Resources Council of Maine

3 Wade Street • Augusta, Maine • 04330

November 3, 2015

Members of the Maine Board of Pesticides Control
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
22 State House Station
August, ME 04333

Dear Members of the Maine Board of Pesticides Control:

Since its inception in 1959, the Natural Resources Council of Maine has been steadfast in its commitment to protecting the nature of Maine by restoring and conserving Maine's environment. Our 16,000 members and supporters recognize, treasure and defend the natural resources and beauty that make Maine such an amazing place to live, work and raise a family. We have a strong interest in minimizing the application of pesticides in our environment, which can affect water quality, wildlife, and human health.

NRCM has reviewed the letter submitted by Mr. Paul Schlein to the Board of Pesticides Control; the materials referenced in Mr. Schlein's letter, including the incidents that propelled him to contact the Board; and the overall policies governing the commercial and residential use and application of pesticides in Maine.

NRCM strongly agrees with Maine's policy, as stated in Maine law, to "work to find ways to use the minimum amount of pesticides needed to effectively control targeted pests in all areas of application. The agencies of the State involved in the regulation or use of pesticides shall promote the principles and the implementation of integrated pest management and other science-based technology to minimize reliance on pesticides..."

In light of the significant increase in the use of pesticides in Maine over the past two decades, we concur with Mr. Schlein, a former Public Information Officer for the Board of Pesticides Control, that a comprehensive review of implementation of this policy, as stated in Title 22, Section 1471-X, is needed.

NRCM further agrees with Mr. Schlein's assertion that an increase in the amount and funding for education is not only warranted, but necessary, in light of the well-documented, negative effects pesticides can have on the health of our water, air, soil, vegetation, wildlife and ultimately, the citizens of Maine.

Finally, as Mr. Schlein has highlighted and the Board has seen, the requirements that applicators currently have regarding notification to land owners, neighbors and the general public, as well as the lack of rapid (or any) response in the event of an emergency or accidental exposure to toxic pesticides, are woefully inadequate and must be addressed.

NRCM supports and works with communities around Maine which have the right under Maine's constitution and our long-treasured Home Rule to regulate pesticide use and application in order to protect citizens and the environment. We also believe the Board, as the state's lead agency on pesticides, has an important role to play in ensuring that municipalities and individual citizens are educated about the risks of pesticide use, the benefits and well-documented positive results of alternatives to management with pesticides, and the timely and accurate dissemination of information to communities looking for assistance and information.

The Natural Resources Council of Maine looks forward to working with the Board of Pesticides Control to ensure creation and implementation of policies consistent with the statement of purpose regarding the Board's role in regulating pesticides, "safeguarding the public health, safety and welfare, and for the further purpose of protecting natural resources of the State."

Thank you for your attention to these important issues and Mr. Schlein's concerns. We look forward to your response and to working together to protect Mainers and Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Lakeman".

Sarah Lakeman
Sustainable Maine Project Director
Natural Resources Council of Maine