



**Oakland City Attorney's Office**

# **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Oakland applauds state decision to abandon aerial spray program**

Oakland, CA – On Friday, City Attorney John Russo applauded the state's decision to abandon a massive aerial spray program that would have released tons of questionable chemicals in the skies over Oakland.

For more than two years, Oakland and other cities have fought the state's plan to spray urban areas with a chemical to eradicate the Light Brown Apple Moth, which farmers consider a threat to crops. The California Department of Food & Agriculture announced last week that "aerial treatment with moth pheromones is (no longer) a management tool in the program."

"From the beginning, we opposed the state's 'spray first and ask questions later' approach," City Attorney Russo said Friday. "Blanketing our homes, businesses, schools, reservoirs and gardens with an untested chemical was not only bad policy – it was an unnecessary risk to public health."

Russo credited the Department of Food & Agriculture for ultimately making the right decision, and thanked Oakland citizens who spent countless hours researching, organizing and working to hold their government accountable.

In 2008, the state announced plans to spray a chemical called "CheckMate" over Bay Area cities before conducting any real environmental review – despite hundreds of complaints of adverse health reactions to the chemical after it was dropped over the Monterey/Santa Cruz area.

The Oakland City Council authorized the City Attorney to pursue an aggressive legal strategy to prevent any spraying without a serious environmental review. The Council pointed out that "aerial and other blanket pesticide applications have repeatedly been shown in the past to cause unintended, unpredictable and often serious human health effects."

After Oakland and other cities threatened legal action, the state conducted an Environmental Impact Report and agreed to abandon aerial spraying over highly populated urban areas. However, until last month, the state still planned to use airplanes to spray a small patch of Oakland near the Caldecott Tunnel in the North Hills area.

In a letter on March 4 of this year, the City Attorney's Office repeated concerns about any spraying in the absence of specific information about the location to be sprayed or the potential effects on the people and the environment of Oakland.

Facing continued opposition, the CDFA finally issued a "clarification" that its Apple Moth program would no longer include aerial spraying. According to a statement issued by the Department, "The only two treatment methods being considered currently are the placement of pheromone twist ties on trees and plants, and the release of sterile moths."

For more information, including Oakland's letters opposing aerial spraying, please go to:  
<http://www.oaklandcityattorney.org/Community/AppleMoth.html>

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