

Surface Water Protection Concepts for Pesticides

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The Food and Agricultural Code requires the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) “To protect the environment from environmentally harmful pesticides by prohibiting, regulating, or ensuring proper stewardship of those pesticides.” DPR’s Environmental Monitoring Branch samples air and water to determine whether pesticide residues are moving offsite at levels of concern, and develops pesticide use mitigation practices. Sampling conducted by DPR as well as federal, state, and local agencies, private industry, and environmental groups has shown that pesticides contaminate surface water. This contamination can primarily cause toxicity to aquatic organisms, but occasionally exceeds levels protective of human health.

Based on monitoring data, DPR adopted regulations in 2007 to reduce levels of dormant insecticides in surface water. Pesticides have also been found in surface water during the growing season, as a result of both urban and rural use. As a result, DPR is now planning to adopt regulations that address both urban and rural sources of contamination by these pesticides that can occur year-round.