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BOARD OF PESTICIDES CONTROL

June 24, 2010

University of Maine at Machias, Sennett Hall, Clipper Lounge
34 Downeast Drive, Machias

**PUBLIC INFORMATION GATHERING MEETING
ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE NOTIFICATION REGISTRY
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS**

7:00 PM

- Present: Eckert, Simonds, Jemison, and Qualey
- Chairman Simonds introduced the purpose of the meeting and provided some background and history about the development of the comprehensive registry.

First to speak was Davis Taylor, resident of Bar Harbor and a professor of economics at the College of the Atlantic. Taylor is developing a small organic farm in Knox County. He advocates for a broader registry, not just agricultural applications. Taylor supports the ¼ mile notification distance. He recognizes that there will be cost to farmers (business), but says the cost should be internalized. He supports a comprehensive registry. He suggested there may need to be a size threshold for the applications subject to the registry.

Gordon Colby manages 5000 acres for Allen's Blueberry Freezer, comprised of 85 growers spread around the state. He has a list of 60 neighbors whom he currently notifies and he's completely comfortable with the old system. Colby said he works well with his neighbors. For example, they can call to request that the spray schedule work around special occasions. Colby was concerned about the ad "propagating fear," and he is most concerned that the staff didn't see that the ad was offensive. Colby observed that BPC staff and environmentalists have lunch together. Growers are trained, regulated and accountable. Colby believes that the ¼ mile notification distance is crazy. He said that it required his company to do extensive work to get four names from the earlier registry and two were already on his list.

Nancy Oden does not believe that the Board will help. Many people in Washington County do not have internet access. No one on the Board lives anywhere near Machias. She stated that aerial spraying is going on right now in Washington Country. She believes applicators prefer working on weekends when no one can be reached at BPC. Oden pointed out that wildlife can't be notified. She believes that Legislators pander to agriculture, but that the BPC is not here to pander to agriculture, it is here to protect the people. She stated that she has been hit by spray drift twice. Oden suggested that the one week notification is ludicrous; they don't always spray when they say they will. She stated that the whole notification thing is to make people feel good. Oden observed that Machias has Velpar

in the municipal water supply. She expressed concern that only four of seven Board members were present.

Michael Worcester, a health and physical education teacher at Machias High School is totally opposed to aerial spraying. "Nobody has the right to poison people." Worcester explained that a helicopter is planning to spray next to his home in the next few days. The last time they sprayed it exacerbated his son's asthma problem. Washington County has a very high cancer rate which he felt was related to pesticide use.

George Molinsky, Jr. stated that nobody has the right to be poisoned. He said that he has seen the petroleum sheen in the water and pesticides on his windshield after spraying. He believes that everyone should be notified about pesticide spraying. The US mail is too slow, but email would work. Tourists need notification too. The BPC should publish notice about spraying. Wild blueberries are a misnomer, as there is nothing wild about them. Molinsky hopes that BPC are all out of jobs soon as they won't be needed once the spraying is halted.

Ivan Hanscom is a small blueberry grower. He urges common sense and contends that no one wants to spray more than is necessary because pesticides are expensive. He doesn't like the 1320 feet because it is related to the property, not to houses. Hanscom suggested publishing a list of pesticide application with approximate times in March to inform everyone.

Bob Foster, a former code enforcement officer from Lubec, has problems with the notification registry in general. Too many people will be left out, and what recourse does the homeowner have? He stated that municipalities have information about property owners available on the internet. Foster says the state constitution protects the "health & safety" of the public, the so-called "natural rights." He believes the Board should put the burden back on the person applying the pesticides. Foster asked if BPC was in with the chemical manufacturers or the environmentalists. He doesn't believe BPC has enough money or people for the job. He stated that the distances currently used are not sufficient. Their bee hives are 1580 feet from the blueberry field, so they won't qualify to be notified under the current law.

Bryan McCleary is a crop consultant/fertilizer salesman who lives in southern Maine and has five children. One of his children has allergies, and he said that pesticides can affect allergies. He also understands that there is no such thing as a risk free world. McCleary said that small growers are having to deal with hysteria caused by public perceptions about pesticides. He noted that organic doesn't mean no pesticides. He stated that everyone has pesticides in their homes, e.g. bleach, soap, etc. and that homeowners are more of a problem.

Karen Baldowski keeps bee hives and said that her bees are at risk because they are 1600 feet from a blueberry field and the new registry only provides for notification 1320 feet from the spray site. She believes that there should be a wider radius for notification, but the registry is a step forward. She is pleased that the EPA has banned endosulfan. She noted that not all pesticides are bad, and growers need some chemicals. There should be care taken in which pesticides are approved. She spoke about native pollinators and the oil disaster in the Gulf. She believes notification is important, and asked that the distances be larger.

Debra Gardiner said she has a “non-toxic bias.” She said that drift probably goes further than ¼ mile, noting the Quebec fires. She said there should not be a fee for the registry; this is a right, not a privilege. She said we can eliminate drift by not spraying.

Katie Greene works at MOFGA. She suggested looking at what other states have done; some states have higher distances than ¼ mile, but she believes ¼ miles is reasonable. She distributed four handouts that included some MOFGA recommendations for the registry and distances. She noted that organic farmers will have to follow the rules as well. She is disappointed that non-agricultural applications do not have to notify.

Dwayne Shaw works for the Downeast Salmon Federation and owns 30 acres of organic blueberries. He believes that forestry should be included in the registry; such things as wreath brush plantations include many acres. He believes there should be a threshold around licensed applicators, and that distances should be determined by science, not politics or economics. He said that Allen’s does the best they can under the current rules. He stated that growers believe ground spraying is more efficient so they won’t go back to aerial spraying. He said that roads shouldn’t be factored in to determine abutters.

Jacob Vandesandi is an organic blueberry grower in Columbia Falls. He believes that pesticides are not healthy for humans and that drift is unavoidable. He understands that “real time” notification is hard, but believes that it has to happen, and to all abutters, otherwise some will “fall through the cracks.” He believes that applicators should bear the cost for this.

Paul Sweetland began by saying that farmers are environmentalists; food keeps us healthy. He believes we need larger tracts of land to protect the environment but says that most of the people he works with are small farms and that the economy is supported by small farms. He believes that pesticides are designed to be toxic to insects and weeds, but not to people. Everything has a toxicity; everything we eat has a toxicity. He said he has been farming for decades and that agricultural practices are fine until someone builds a house 20 feet away. He stated that the health effects people talk about are mostly in urban areas, pesticides used inside buildings. He believes there should be a 25 foot buffer between conventional and organic fields.

Nathan Mason described himself as an “evil traditional, conventional farmer” but also as an environmentalist. He has a degree in environmental biology from UMaine Machias. He stated that preventing drift is difficult, but mandatory requirements create division, and there is a lot of hostility between conventional farmers and people opposed to pesticides. He believes that neighbors should talk to farmers and they should work to find common ground. He suggested fields should be posted at point of entry prior to application. He finds the new statute workable.