

# Analysis reveals cancer-linked Telone is 20% of all pesticides used in Stanislaus County

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Stanislaus –On January 18, California regulators met in Sacramento to debate adopting new rules around the use of the toxic pesticide Telone, as Stanislaus -based Valley Improvement Projects and other advocates seek much stricter regulations than proposed in order to better protect farmworkers and residents.

As highlighted in a new analysis developed by VIP and Environmental Working Group, Telone has been linked to cancer – and regulators in California and at the federal Environmental Protection Agency have known for many years about the hazards of applying it. Telone, also known as 1,3-dichloropropene or 1,3-D, was banned in California from 1990 to 1995. Agricultural use of 1,3-D is not allowed in the European Union because of its health risks.

The new analysis, relying on data obtained from 2021 pesticide use records from the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office, reveals that more than 6 million pounds of agricultural pesticides were applied in the county in 2021, and over twenty percent – at least 1.3 million pounds – was Telone.

“Too many Stanislaus County residents face a possible increased risk of cancer from the spraying of Telone and other toxic pesticides,” said co-author Bianca Lopez, VIP co-founder and analysis project director. She said the California Department of Pesticide Regulation’s (DPR) proposed Telone regulations are inadequate because they fall short of Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) standards.

Stanislaus County has some of the heaviest pesticide use in California. Almost half of county residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, according to the 2020 U.S. Census.

“The DPR must redesign their current proposal to protect to the OEHHA No Significant Risk Level (NSRL) and add farmworker protections which prohibit farmworkers from being required to work next to fields recently treated with 1,3-D,” Lopez said.

“We can't wait for the state to mandate better protections and need local government to exercise their power to protect children and expand the buffer zones near schools, and

publicize on their website all Notices of Intent (NOIs) for proposed Telone applications that include location, date, and time and implement setbacks to protect farmworkers,” she added.

“We are seeking parent participation and will be reaching out to the District Superintendents, and school Principals to help us reach parents of those schools in townships with high Telone use and high pesticide use overall,” said Lopez.

The DPR held a hearing on [January 18](#) to discuss a draft rule it announced [in November 2022](#) on regulation of the agricultural industry’s use of Telone.

January 18 was also the end of a DPR public comment period on the new rule, which many public health, environmental justice and other advocates strongly oppose for being too weak. They say the planned rule does not adequately restrict use of Telone, leaving unaddressed ongoing health threats for farmworkers and other rural residents exposed to the chemical.

The DPR argues that its new rules will better protect people from exposure to Telone and its health risks. The rulemaking was covered in [an article in The Bakersfield Californian](#).

The widespread use of Telone and other chemicals in heavily agricultural Stanislaus County, as detailed in the new analysis, shows why more stringent pesticide rules are vital. The report was developed by VIP in coordination with the national nonprofit EWG to educate the public in the county about the risks of use of pesticides, particularly Telone.

VIP and EWG found that pesticides are applied to Stanislaus County fields near 123 schools, and Telone is used near 17 schools. Children who attend school or live near where pesticides are applied are among those who may face higher exposure to pesticides. Toxic chemicals are especially harmful to children’s developing organs and tissues.

Telone is a fumigant, sprayed on fields to kill most organisms in the soil before crops – primarily almonds, but also sweet potatoes, walnuts, tree fruit and berries – are planted. But the chemical doesn’t just affect the immediate area around fields where it’s applied, as it can drift for many miles.

California years ago identified 1,3-D as a chemical known to cancer under its Proposition 65 warning and notice program, and the need for much tighter DPR restrictions is long overdue.

The U.S. EPA identified 1,3-D as being likely to cause cancer in 1985 and stood by that designation for many years. But during the Trump administration, the agency took [the much-criticized step](#) of issuing a draft assessment declaring that Telone was only “suggestive” of causing cancer – a much weaker finding sought by the agriculture industry.

“Our new analysis and map will help Stanislaus County residents understand what chemicals are being sprayed on farms near their homes and schools,” said Sydney Evans, EWG science analyst and one of the authors of the report. “Providing this information is the first step to

empowering residents to demand better regulations and oversight from local and state authorities."

The conventional agriculture industry often claims a pesticide is safe right up until the moment it is banned because of overwhelming evidence of its toxicity to humans from its long-time use. The DPR needs to make the proposed 1,3-D regulation much more protective and work to end use of this dangerous pesticide.

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*Since 2012, Valley Improvement Projects has advocated on behalf of underrepresented and marginalized residents of California's Central Valley by advocating for social and environmental justice. Visit <https://valleyimprovementprojects.org> for more information.*

*The Environmental Working Group is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization that empowers people to live healthier lives in a healthier environment. Through research, advocacy and unique education tools, EWG drives consumer choice and civic action. Visit [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org) for more information.*