



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

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The Honorable Alex Lee

March 23, 2023

Chair, Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials
1020 N Street, Room 171
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 99 (Connolly) as Amended 2023-03-21– Support

Dear Chair Lee,

The County of Humboldt has a particular interest in supporting the passage of a state law to provide counties the option to require integrated pest management without the use of pesticides and herbicides on state highway right-of-ways in a county and that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will honor that request.

Since March 25, 1997, in response to a request by the County of Humboldt Board of Supervisors, Caltrans has not used herbicides to clear vegetation on its rights of way in unincorporated areas of the County. Similar requests have been made by local Indian tribes and incorporated cities and these requests honored by Caltrans. It would be beneficial to the County if its informal arrangement with Caltrans were clarified and codified as envisioned by AB99, thus the County supports the passage of AB99 into law.

Vegetation management on County roads and State highway right-of-ways without the use of pesticides and herbicides initially began in the late 1980s. When Caltrans proposed to resume its herbicide program in the County in 1997, the Board of Supervisors intervened with its request to Caltrans as described above.

In November, 2022, the County of Humboldt Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to oppose the use of herbicides on county-owned land and right-of-ways unless no other feasible alternative exists. A copy of the Resolution is attached.

To our knowledge there have been no reports of safety violations, vehicle accidents, roadside fire ignitions, spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants or other problems caused by the cessation of herbicides for vegetation control on right-of-ways. Both the County and Caltrans vegetation management teams apparently have perfected their roadside maintenance operations in more than three decades of practice by using a variety of options, the essence of IPM programs as described by AB99. I support AB 99.

Steve Madrone, 5th District Supervisor and Chair of the Board.

Steve Madrone