



Madera County Department of Agriculture Weights and Measures

Robert J. Rolan, Agricultural Commissioner
Sealer of Weights and Measures

Jay Seslowe, Assistant Commissioner/Sealer

December 20, 2004

Randy Segawa
Senior Environmental Research Scientist
California Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Pesticide Regulation
1001 I St.
P.O. Box 4015
Sacramento, CA 95812-4015

Re: Environmental Justice Project

I have identified a site that meets most of the criteria of your email message dated November 10, 2004. The site, commonly referred to "Midway", is a small community of approximately 15 homes which lie in an intensively farmed setting of vineyards and orchards. The homes are situated on Road 32, north of Avenue 8 in Madera County. The community is sandwiched between Highway 99 on its east side and a vineyard fifty feet to the west (upwind) side. Numerous complaints, often health-related, have been received from the residents since at least 1999. The operator of the vineyard, Batth and Mahil Farms was fined \$751 in June, 2000 for drifting sulfur onto those residences.

Subsequent to that episode, significant efforts, including a "town hall meeting" at one of the residences, were extended to the community. The grower was requested to contact me before performing pest control operations; notice was later extended to include disking and other cultural practices. On most occasions, an inspector has been sent to observe the activities to evaluate environmental impacts to the community. (Virtually all sulfur applications were moved between midnight and morning hours with an inspector at each of those applications). Although the vineyard was recently removed, the grower plans to replant in vines, and we have had several conversations regarding options for plant material that would serve as an effective screen and buffer between the vineyard and the houses.

Midway residents have asked for air sampling in the past; I have not been in a position to do so. Your project would allow us to extend our level of response to a community that does not recognize our past or current efforts to protect them through regulatory compliance. Additional scientific assessments would provide significant value to Midway residents and the adjacent farming entities. Please contact me if I can be of any assistance to your evaluation of this request.

Robert J. Rolan
Madera County Agricultural Commissioner