Regulating Cannabis in California

- Recreational cannabis was legalized in California on January 1st, 2018.
- California Bureau of Cannabis Control (BCC) is the lead agency for cannabis regulation.
- The BCC requires all end-use manufactured cannabis products to pass licensed laboratory testing before being sold.
- The BCC is currently testing for 66 active ingredients found in pesticides.
- California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is responsible for issuing cannabis cultivation licenses.
- There are no registered pesticides for use on Cannabis.
- California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) has issued cannabis pesticide use guidelines.
- CDPR has examples of pesticides that cannot be used on Cannabis. Some of the pesticides that cannot be used include:
  - Those not registered for a food use in California
  - California Restricted Material (including Federal Restricted Material)
  - Those on the Groundwater protection list
- CDPR’s SWPP is developing an environmental monitoring study to evaluate the impacts of offsite transport of pesticides from legal cannabis cultivation to California’s surface water.

Examples of EPA registered compounds toxic to aquatic organisms

Examples of pesticides used in legal cannabis cultivation in California

Examples of pesticides restricted due to human health concerns and monitored by residue testing on manufactured cannabis products

The Surface Water Protection Program’s (SWPP) goal is to:

1. Characterize pesticide residues, identify the sources of the contamination, determine the mechanisms of offsite movement of pesticides to surface water, and develop site-specific mitigation strategies. These are done primarily through surface water monitoring in consultation with other agencies, and research to characterize the factors that lead to offsite movement.*

Importance

Legal cannabis cultivation is a commodity that requires novel research across many fields, and also presents regulatory and pesticide registration challenges. Cannabis cultivation laws and regulations vary throughout the United States and among counties and cities within California. As these laws continue to change, it is possible that new products will be submitted to be registered specifically for cannabis.

Gaining an understanding of pest pressures, pesticide use, and the potential for off-site pesticide transport in cannabis cultivation will set an important foundation for protecting human health and the environment. SWPP will develop monitoring strategies and priorities for cannabis cultivation in California similar to that of other agricultural commodities.

Key Study Questions

- What pesticides are being used in legal cannabis cultivation in California?
- What are the primary pesticide transport pathways offsite for pesticides used in cannabis?
- How do pesticide use patterns, composition, and transport pathways differ among indoor, outdoor, and mixed grow? Does this vary among regions in California?
- Which watersheds and sewer sheds in California are at the highest risk of exposure to pesticides used on legal cannabis cultivation?
- What is the pesticide load from legal cannabis cultivation to wastewater and/or surface waters?
- How does legal cannabis cultivation impact aquatic organisms in California?
- How can CDPR integrate cannabis into a long term monitoring project?