My name is Karen Morrison and I serve as the acting chief deputy director at the Department of Pesticide Regulation.

I would like to thank everyone for joining us today, and for providing input into our continued system development.

First and foremost, our mission at DPR is to protect human health and the environment by regulating pesticide sales and use and by fostering reduced risk pest management, with a vision to accelerate the transition to safer, more-sustainable pest management.

The proposed statewide notification system we’re presenting today builds on our existing pesticide regulatory structure, complementing the laws and regulations that govern the safe legal application of pesticides.

In my role at DPR, I support our project teams, scientists, information technology experts, and our UC Davis consultants on this critical notification initiative.

The development of a statewide pesticide notification system is a priority for this department, for Cal EPA, for the governor, and for communities across the state.

We began developing the system in response to community interest for information on the pesticides used around them.

This interest was shared by the legislature, and as a part of the 2021-22 state budget, DPR received 10 million dollars to support the development of this notification system.
Public input has been critical to the department's design and development of the system, which will provide the public with information in advance of approved pesticide applications.

We'd like to thank everyone who provided earlier input to inform our development of the proposed system elements I will be presenting today.

DPR conducted focus groups in August 2021 to gather input from community members, regulatory agencies, growers, and regulated industries.

We considered that input in developing the draft guiding principles and practical considerations, and the department has continued to consider the focus group input throughout the initial development stages of the notification system.

DPR convened public webinars in November 2021 to gather input on the draft guiding principles and practical considerations.

We had more than 600 attendees at these webinars and collected valuable feedback on both the guiding principles and practical considerations, along with other input to inform the technical, regulatory, and practical next steps that helps guide our conversation today.

We heard a wide variety of suggestions from these public sessions, including the desire to test key elements in advance of a statewide system launch.

The county-led pilot projects launched by the Riverside, Stanislaus, and Ventura County Agricultural Commissioners are doing just this.

The Santa Cruz pilot will follow this summer.

DPR also heard a range of ideas about which pesticides to include in the statewide notification system.
Other key topics included how far in advance of an application to provide a notification, with suggestions ranging from four hours to seven days before an application, and how to deliver the notification, including text messages, flyers, a website platform, and voice messages.

[silence] Since November, DPR has conducted a review of the existing California pesticide regulatory process and county-based permitting systems that will be used to provide meaningful information for the statewide system.

All of the input we have received has been valuable to our development of the proposed design elements we’ll review today.

We know that communities are interested in getting the statewide system up and running as soon as possible, and we are seeking to build on existing regulatory systems to do that.

Based on collective public feedback and extensive department research, we have developed and would like to share with you today our proposal for the statewide notification system.

This proposal consists of nine design elements, some of which will necessitate further regulatory changes.

Your feedback today on these design elements will help inform how we proceed with two critical time-sensitive areas of work on the statewide system: technology development and regulatory development.

[silence] Following the review of feedback we receive in the workshops this week, we plan to convene additional workshops later this year, in-person and virtual, to discuss the pilot projects and additional system-wide development decisions.

I next want to share some key milestones from the last several months.
In addition to collecting public input, DPR has worked extensively over the past six months to build the concept and framework for a technology system that can enable statewide notification.

DPR is designing the technology to support the statewide notification system since it does not currently exist elsewhere.

That technology must also fit within and work with the state's pesticide regulatory structure.

We are also considering the related regulatory changes necessary to apply the system consistently across the state, which I'll speak to later in my presentation.

Following feedback from previous public dialogue, three pilot projects have launched with a fourth to follow this summer.

We encourage you to provide feedback on the county-led pilots to the participating County Agricultural Commissioners' Offices.

UC Davis Center for Regional Change will also conduct an independent evaluation of the pilot projects later this year.

Our aim today is to share the design elements we are proposing for the statewide system and listen to your feedback on those design elements.

Feedback from today will be combined with feedback from the pilots and the workshops at the end of the year to support the regulatory and technology development by DPR for this system.

As always, we appreciate your involvement and participation in providing input during our design development process.
The nine design elements that DPR is seeking your input on today are: the anticipated users of the system, how users can access notification information, the pesticides included in the system, the area for which notification will be provided, the timing of notification, the languages in which notification will be provided, how messages will be delivered to users, what information will be included in the notification, and finally, what additional resources could be provided on a web-based platform.

We will now go through each design element individually and describe the current proposals and any associated opportunities and challenges of the specific elements.

The first design element addresses the likely users of notification system.

The state's proposed system anticipates use by any person interested in knowing about scheduled local applications of certain pesticides.

The second design element addresses how users can access notifications.

Previous feedback has identified privacy concerns for entering personal identifying information, so DPR's proposed system would provide an option for users to anonymously enter an address through a web-based platform to access notifications of applications.

The address could be any valid California address, a home, business, school, etc.

and would provide a list of nearby scheduled applications.

A demonstration of the system design will be provided later in the workshop.

The system would also include an optional feature for users to receive push notification messages, if desired.
To automatically receive these messages, users would provide again any valid California address, and either a phone number or email address to receive the notification.

The third design element addresses the type of pesticides that will be included in the notification system.

Our proposed system would provide notification of the agricultural use of California-restricted material pesticides.

Restricted materials are pesticides that pose a higher potential risk to public health or the environment compared to other pesticides, so they may only be applied by licensed pesticide applicators.

Before an applicator can apply these restricted materials, they must obtain approval from their local County Agricultural Commissioner.

This approval requirement is an existing mechanism that could be integrated into an electronic statewide notification system to provide notice of scheduled pesticide applications.

The fourth design element identifies the applications users will be notified of.

The proposed system would pull location information directly from the Notices of Intent submitted by growers as a part of the permitting process for using restricted material pesticides.

The standard location information submitted on all Notices of Intent, or NOIs, is based on a statewide mapping grid system.

The most specific pesticide application location included in this mapping grid is a one square mile area called a section, which you can see highlighted in red in this Notice of Intent form.
The Notice of Intent form also has a location field highlighted in blue.

However, the locations submitted are not in the form of a standard street address.

They are often shorthand, and they typically require supplemental maps submitted in a separate permit package for specific information.

We understand that there is interest in receiving the exact location of pesticide applications, but the current notice of intent process is not designed to provide standard location information.

[silence] When County Agricultural Commissioners review the Notice of Intent, they do have access to physical site maps, but it is not currently feasible or required for these maps to be maintained electronically for the approximately 117,000 NOIs filed annually statewide.

Going back to the proposed statewide system, users would be able to enter any valid California street address to search for or receive notifications for planned applications in the section in which the address is located and all adjacent sections.

To illustrate this, let's consider an example family who lives in Fresno indicated by the house on this map.

The sections we've been discussing are one-by-one mile areas numbered here.

So hypothetically this family lives in section number 21.

Now removing the Fresno map, we just have a generic mapping grid that DPR has access to.

DPR is proposing that the public could view pesticide applications within a nine square mile area around the address entered.
This area consists of the nine sections centered around notification address entered as shown in the yellow box.

For example, a search based on the street address of the house icon located in section number 21 would result in a notification about an agricultural application at site 1 in section 21.

That search would also result in a notification about applications occurring at site 2 in section number 26, but not site 3 in section number 13.

The search would provide the specific section information, but not the exact location within the one-by-one mile area.

[silence] The fifth design element addresses the amount of time between notification of scheduled application and the scheduled application itself.

Our proposed system would provide information about approved applications of permitted restricted material pesticides at least 24 hours prior to a scheduled application.

To provide some background, here is a graphic that shows how the current restricted material permitting steps, which allow County Agricultural Commissioners to evaluate potential public and environmental risks.

First, a person must get licensed by DPR before they can buy or use a restricted material.

The certified pesticide applicator license includes educational and training requirements and is re-certified every two years.

Next, a person would apply for a restricted material permit from a County Ag Commissioner with detailed information about potential applications, and then the commissioner evaluates potential risks to people or the environment.
If the County Agricultural Commissioner grants the permit, it is approved for one to three years depending on a number of factors, including crop type.

After obtaining the restricted material permits, the pesticide applicator must submit a Notice of Intent at least 24 hours in advance of each application, specifying the site and date that they are intending to begin the restricted material application.

At that point, the County Agricultural Commissioner reviews the Notice of Intent, approved permit, sites, dates, and current conditions for potential risks to people or the environment.

The County Agricultural Commissioner may approve the Notice of Intent, deny the Notice of Intent, or require additional measures to protect against identified risks.

If the County Agricultural Commissioner approves the Notice of Intent, the applicator has four days to begin applying the restricted material.

For the statewide notification system to provide the public with notification at least 24 hours prior to a scheduled application, and allow the County Agricultural Commissioner sufficient time to evaluate the Notice of Intent, the Notices of Intent will have to be submitted earlier than currently required.

This will require a regulatory change.

The sixth design element addresses languages in which notification will be provided.

The state's proposed notification system would at a minimum be available in English and Spanish.

We are exploring the feasibility of including other languages as well.
The seventh design element addresses how notifications will be delivered to subscribers who opt to register for notification messages.

Email, text messages, push notification, and other methods are currently under consideration.

The delivery methods used will determine how much information can be provided with the notification.

For example, text messages have limitations on how many words or characters can be used.

We are also evaluating options for notification deliveries that do not require Internet access.

The eighth design element addresses the information that will be included in the notification message.

Our proposed notification would include the scheduled date of the pesticide application, the section area where the application will occur, and the pesticide being used.

Additional information may be included depending on the mode of notification delivery.

For example, text message notification would be brief, but email or web-based notification could include more information.

The ninth and final design element we're presenting today addresses additional information that could be referenced on a web-based notification system platform, or in an email.

We are evaluating links to helpful resources, such as information about restricted materials, or how to report a potential pesticide exposure.
This concludes my presentation on the proposed statewide notification system design elements.

Thank you so much for your attention.