

(date)

Dennis F. Howard, Ph.D., Chief
Bureau of Pesticides
Division of Agricultural Environmental Services
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
3125 Conner Blvd., (L-29)
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1650

Dear Dr. Howard:

I am writing to you to express my concern over the recent approval by EPA of the pesticide methyl iodide as a replacement for methyl bromide. This chemical poses serious risks to the health of agricultural workers from direct exposure in the fields, to rural communities from drift, and also to the general public, because of the potential for surface and ground water contamination. Because of these threats, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services should not permit the use of methyl iodide for use in agriculture in Florida. Instead, DACS should implement measures that encourage growers to transition to sustainable pest control alternatives, rather than promoting their dependence on harsh contaminants by the substitution of one harmful chemical for another.

In a letter to EPA, 54 scientists, including 5 Nobel laureates, expressed their concerns about the risks of methyl iodide to pregnant women, the fetus, children, the elderly, farmworkers and people living in rural, agricultural communities. Methyl iodide exposure puts people at risk for cancer, thyroid problems, neurotoxicity, and birth defects, and the high volatility of the gas means that there is the additional risk of drift off the site of application and into neighboring communities. Because of Florida's sandy soils and shallow aquifer, contamination to our drinking water supplies from the use of methyl iodide should sound the alarm to your agency that the threats are not worth the risk. The three agricultural areas where methyl bromide is currently being used are all adjacent to major metropolitan areas. These high population centers could be seriously and drastically impacted if their drinking water supplies become contaminated.

I encourage DACS to avoid potential future problems and environmental disaster. The potential harm to human health risks from the use of this pesticide is sufficient to warrant Florida's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to exclude it from use in agriculture in Florida.

Thank you for your serious consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,

(your name, address, and zip code)