<Date>

<Name>

<Title>

<Address>

Dear <Insert Name of Official Here>,

My family and I are concerned that local efforts to spray mosquitoes will adversely affect our health and the environment. We believe that mosquitoes, and by extension, the spread of West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne diseases, can be controlled by less toxic means, rather than spraying pesticides. There is no credible evidence that spraying pesticides used to kill adult mosquitoes reduce or prevent mosquito-borne incidents or illnesses. In fact, one study from the Harvard School of Public Health found that aerosol plumes fail to contact the target mosquitoes and may not effectively reduce mosquito populations. This means that the vast majority of pesticide is allowed to enter the air and environment to trigger asthma responses, rashes, headaches, nausea, and chronic effects in the communities where spraying occurs, in addition to contaminating water supplies and endangering non-target insects such as pollinators, birds and fish.

An ideal mosquito management strategy emphasizes public education, prevention, and monitoring methods. Spraying should be used only as a last resort. Our community should focus our resources on these principles. Here are a few examples:

**1. Cleanup**

 Ensure continuous flow of water in streams by eliminating border vegetation that produces habitat for mosquito development.
 Drain or fill back-water pools and swamps where stagnant water accumulates. Sanitary landfills which can often be used in such locations will eliminate mosquito breeding sites and improve the value of the land.
 Remove overgrown vegetation and debris from along the banks of the lakes and ponds to discourage mosquito breeding. Such bodies of water should have a steep clean shoreline with as little vegetation as possible to prevent vegetation from causing stagnant pools of water.

**2. Use Natural Predators**

Use indigenous fish populations to eat mosquito larvae in shallow waters and ornamental pools. Certain freshwater fish, such as mosquitofish, fathead minnows, killifish, and bluegill can eat their weight in mosquito larvae. These predacious fish are used successfully in the marshes in New York, New Jersey and other parts of the U.S.
Recently New Jersey introduced 10,000 tiny copepod crustaceans to eat mosquito larvae in ditches, pools and other areas of stagnant water. Louisiana has also been successful with copepods for larval control.

3. ***Least-toxic Pesticide Options***

Utilize Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis (Bti), a biological larvicide that prevents mosquitoes from developing into breeding, biting adults. This product can be placed in standing waters or pools that cannot be drained.

Sincerely

Your Name