



## **BEYOND PESTICIDES**

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### **In Wake of Bug Bomb Explosion, Group Calls on District to Ban Deadly Pesticide**

(Washington, DC, July 2, 2009) In the wake of yesterday's "bug bomb" explosion in the District of Columbia, Beyond Pesticides, a national public health and environmental advocacy organization, is urging the District government to immediately suspend, on an emergency basis, the use of these products. In a letter today, the organization is asking the District Director of the Environment, George Hawkins to "suspend the use of bug bombs, or total release foggers (TRF), in the District of Columbia until it can be determined that the residents of the District are adequately protected from these products." According to Beyond Pesticides, the residential explosion involving the use of a bug bomb, or pesticide fumigant, "illustrates how dangerous these pesticide products are to consumers, threatening the lives of children and families." Beyond Pesticides cites the availability of least-toxic and non-toxic alternatives for preventing and managing insects, making these bombs unnecessary and the hazards unreasonable.

Beyond Pesticides' letter states, "This incident and the registration of pesticides under your authority raises serious concern about the District's reliance on a federal U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) pesticide registration process that has documented deficiencies, unrealistic label requirements, poor assumptions about user capabilities, lack of training, and inadequate understanding of dangers. This situation constitutes an unacceptable threat to the residents of the District of Columbia and presents an unreasonable potential adverse effect and an imminent hazard." [See letter to George Hawkins, Director, District Department of the Environment]

According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report entitled, "Illnesses and Injuries Related to Total Release Foggers - Eight States, 2001-2006," released in its *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, a total of 466 cases of acute, pesticide-related illness or injury were associated with exposure to total release foggers (TRF) between 2001 and 2006. The report states that "these illnesses or injuries often resulted from inability or failure to vacate before the TRF discharged, reentry into the treated space too soon after the TRF was discharged, excessive use of TRFs for the space being treated, and failure to notify others nearby." (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "Illnesses and Injuries Related to Total Release Foggers- Eight States, 2001-2006." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 57(41);1125-1129, 2008.)

The CDC findings also show that TRFs pose risks to bystanders and neighbors. Foggers are considered a cheap way to kill and prevent insects such as cockroaches, fleas, and other bugs from invading homes. They work using flammable aerosol propellants to release pesticide chemicals all at once to fumigate an area.

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Aside from fire and explosive dangers, most foggers contain synthetic pyrethroids, such as permethrin, which are linked to cancer, endocrine disruption, respiratory problems, reproductive effects, neurotoxicity and other health and environmental issues. With a high incidence of illness, explosions and even death from the use of these products, Beyond Pesticides says their use must be restricted or eliminated. Last October, the state of New York took a stand against these pesticide products and moved to classify them as a “restricted-use product”- meaning only licensed pesticide applicators, rather than the general public, will be able to obtain them.

Beyond Pesticides, in its letter to the District Department of the Environment, concludes, “We request that the District act Immediately to stop on an emergency basis the sale of TRF (bug bombs) within the District of Columbia.”