

# OPPOSE

## LD 16 – An Act To Revise Notification Requirements for Pesticides Applications Using Aircraft or Air-carrier Equipment

**Sponsor:** Rep. TIMBERLAKE of Turner

**Cosponsors:** Reps. BLACK of Wilton; CRAFTS of Lisbon; DAVIS of Sangerville; DUNPHY of Embden; LIBBY of Waterboro; LONG of Sherman; VALENTINO of Saco, and WOOD of Sabattus; and Senator MASON of Androscoggin

**Summary:** This bill weakens the requirement that farmers notify nearby people about aerial and air blaster spraying of toxic pesticides.

**Explanation:** This bill dramatically reduces the requirement of farmers who use aircraft (helicopters or airplanes) or air blasters (powerful pump spraying machines similar to snow guns). Under existing law, any citizen in Maine can sign up on a Board of Pesticide Control registry to get information about aerial spraying in their neighborhoods. Any farmer using aircraft must notify people who live within a quarter mile when they are going to spray fields using aircraft. This requirement makes sense because sprayed pesticides can travel a long distance. People living near spray areas should have the right to take simple measures, such as shutting windows, to protect their families, but such precautions can only happen if individuals have notification about planned pesticide applications. Farmers who use air blasters are also required to let people who live within a quarter mile who have signed on to the registry know when they are going to spray, except if they are spraying in an ornamental tree farm or an apple grove, in which case they only need to let people know if they live within 500 feet of the spraying. There was no scientific reason for a less stringent requirement for apple growers or ornamental tree growers; this exemption was simply provided by the Legislature.

Now, LD 16 would essentially gut the requirements of the pesticide registry entirely by reducing the distance at which neighbors need to be notified from a quarter mile to 100 feet, and from 500 feet to 50 feet in the case of apple or ornamental tree growers. These numbers are arbitrary and do not reflect the long distances pesticides may travel after they are sprayed into the air. A pesticide air blaster is like a snow gun at a ski resort, which sends particles significant distances, including if carried by the wind.

The public should have a right to know about toxic chemicals sprayed into the air they breathe.

**NRCM opposes LD 16.**