

Digesting the Sustainable Pest Management Roadmap for California

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The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), and California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) launched the Sustainable Pest Management (SPM) Work Group as part of the State of California's commitment to accelerating the transition away from high-risk pesticides toward adoption of safer, sustainable pest control practices. The result of 21 months of work by the SPM Work Group resulted in recommendations that are documented in "[Accelerating SUSTAINABLE PEST MANAGEMENT: A Roadmap for California](#)". The SPM Work Group addressed both agricultural and urban pest management, and DPR held a series of webinars



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on the recommendations of the Roadmap for Urban Environments ([Spanish](#), [English](#)) and Agricultural Environments ([Spanish](#), [English](#)).

DPR recognizes that there have been real advances towards safer and more sustainable pest management practices in California over the last several decades. However, the roadmap is focused on working to accelerate and expand statewide adoption of sustainable pest management to reduce health and environmental risks associated with pesticide use, particularly in areas disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution.

It is important to understand what is meant by [Sustainable Pest Management](#) in the context of the roadmap. Sustainable Pest Management, as

defined by the roadmap, is a “whole-system approach that builds on the strong foundation of integrated pest management but adds three sustainability pillars: human health/social equity, environmental protection and economic vitality”.

The desired 2050 future state of the roadmap is that “pest management approaches in both agricultural and urban contexts in California will promote human health and safety, ecosystem resilience, agricultural sustainability, community wellbeing, and economic vitality”.

The roadmap presents two broad goals to achieve by 2050:

California has eliminated the use of Priority Pesticides by transitioning to sustainable pest management practices. Sustainable pest management has been adopted as the de facto pest management system in California.

This may lead you to ask, what is a priority pesticide? The roadmap states that “Priority Pesticides are a subset of high-risk pesticides, which are defined as active ingredients that are highly hazardous and/or formulations or uses that pose a likelihood of, or are known to cause, significant or widespread human and/or ecological impacts from their use.”

The roadmap recommends establishing a state-level prioritization process, criteria and an advisory body to determine which specific pesticides fall into the “priority” category. More details about this recommendation may be found in the full roadmap document.

The document also contains detailed recommended actions for implementing the roadmap and achieving the 2050 goals. These include prioritizing pest prevention, coordinating state-level leadership, investing in building sustainable pest management knowledge, improving California’s pesticide registration process and bringing alternative products to market, and enhancing monitoring and data collection. These are all actions that will improve sustainable pest management practices in California but will require significant investment.



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I encourage each of you to read the [full 97-page report](#), watch one of the recorded webinars, or, at the very least, read the [2-page executive summary](#). It is very likely that implementation of these recommendations will impact all of us and there will be future opportunities to engage in that process.

DPR is accepting public comments to inform the prioritization and implementation of the Roadmap’s recommendations through **March 13, 2023 at 5 p.m.** Comments can be shared in writing to alternatives@cdpr.ca.gov.