



SVENA

Skykomish Valley

Environmental & Economic Alliance

svena.org

Honorable Chairman Kirk Pearson and members of the Natural Resources and Parks Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today on an important issue impacting our community, public and environmental health.

My name is Inessa Pearce. I live in Skykomish River Valley, East of Everett in Snohomish County. Skykomish Valley is well loved by our state, national and international visitors for its recreational opportunities and is known for growing tourism industry. In fact, we have so many tourists that traffic on Hwy 2 is often a big problem. My neighborhood alone has numerous homes, families, children, businesses, farms and “organic” farms, gardens and orchards.

My education includes a Masters degree in Chemical Technologies Engineering and I have extensive experience working with chemicals. Currently, I own a recreational lodging business “Rocky’s Retreat” and work with children in public schools. I am also the President of SVENA - Skykomish Valley Environmental & Economic Alliance. SVENA is a group of local residents who are working towards a safer, cleaner, healthier and more beautiful valley to live in and to visit. One of our biggest concerns is pesticide and herbicide spraying on tree farms, including DNR tree farms, that surround us in Skykomish Valley.

What brought me here today is a massive aerial herbicide spray behind my home in Sultan Startup area with a total of over 1,000 acres. It took place on a sunny warm beautiful weekend in September 2015. Most of the residents of the area stayed home enjoying nice fall weather before the start of seasonal rains. People had no idea about the chemical bombing coming over the very neighborhood and watershed that they call home. The loud noise from a helicopter with toxic clouds around it attracted attention of the whole neighborhood. People said it looked like a Vietnam operation for spraying Agent Orange. It reminded others of the famous Love Canal scandal of the ‘70’s.

The spray included a mix of the following chemicals:

- Alligare Glyphosate 5.4 is a potent and toxic herbicide and widely known in national and international publications for its connection to cancer. One of the trade names for products containing glyphosate is Roundup;
- Rotary 2 SL or Imazapyr is a potent and toxic herbicide;
- SMF Extra or Oust is a potent and toxic herbicide;
- SuperSpread MSO is a toxic surfactant.

Since the start of the rainy season, we, the residents of Sultan Startup neighborhood, are extremely concerned about our drinking water wells and about the drift and spread of chemical pollution into our

wells. Each day since the spray application, we aren't sure that this water is safe to drink, especially for children and infants, pregnant women, elderly and the unwell.

To my knowledge, there has not been monitoring or testing of streams, creeks or wells after the herbicide spraying this past fall. There is limited research on chemical drift at tree farms. Nevertheless, WA Department of Ecology confirmed in its research that creeks and streams get contaminated during aerial spraying even after following best practices and precaution measures according to the label. Research paper titled EFFECTIVENESS OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR AERIAL APPLICATION OF FOREST PESTICIDES can be found at our website svena.org. This study was done in 1993. It was found that all 7 streams were contaminated with pesticide pollution but, I believe, BMPs (Best Management Practices) have not been adjusted as a result of that report. In addition, pesticides are not adequately tested and are not tested at all in combinations, inert ingredients are not disclosed, and long term impacts are not fully considered.

To make things simple, contaminated creeks and streams in our watershed connect straight to our shallow wells. They are bringing poison to me and my neighbors at this very moment as I am speaking. Toxic contamination of drinking water is an important matter of public health and safety.

We are requesting changes to the following practices:

1. Written notification for aerial herbicide and pesticide spraying to every resident, school and business of the adjacent watershed with specific date, location and chemicals to be used, including an option for email notifications;
2. Public disclose after spraying of what chemicals were sprayed and where; this can be accomplished through the existing online review system for FPAs (Forest Practice Applications);
3. Monitoring and testing of toxic contamination in creeks, streams and drinking water wells of that watershed;
4. Research on drift and relocation of toxic chemicals on and from tree farms, including direct applications and groundwater contamination;
5. Extended buffer zones for residences, schools, businesses and streams;
6. Establish Emergency Response Standards; the pesticide applicator must provide information on chemicals in a reasonable manner for medical assistance in case of acute exposure;
7. Consider least toxic alternatives to pesticides and prevention methods, including cultural, biological and mechanical weed control;
8. Information and research should be transparent and easily available online to the public.

We suggest that DNR look to their own lands in King County, and the lands of United States Forest Service in the Mount Baker Snoqualmie Forest as a model of successful management of forestlands without the aerial application of pesticides. It can be done. There are many ways to make forestry economical without using harmful forest chemicals. Aerial application of them is particularly dangerous as cannot realistically be kept out of water. Considering the millions we are spending on medical bills and salmon recovery, it makes no sense to put chemicals into waters that humans and salmon use.

Thank you for considering our concerns.

Inessa Pearce

President, SVENA 1-20-2016