



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 25 2024

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 99 without my signature.

This bill would restrict the use of herbicides and pesticides by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for vegetation management along state roads and highways. The bill would also require Caltrans to comply with stricter local ordinances, and publish annual reports on pesticide use, among other requirements.

While I appreciate the intent to promote environmental stewardship, this bill raises several concerns. By allowing local ordinances to override state standards, the bill conflicts with existing state law, which preempts local regulation of pesticide use. The bill also uses unclear terminology, creating implementation and enforcement challenges, and leading to a regulatory patchwork that complicates Caltrans' ability to manage vegetation safely and efficiently across the state. This would increase administrative burdens and limit Caltrans' ability to use the most effective vegetation management tools along state highways.

California has made significant progress in sustainable pest management through the Sustainable Pest Management (SPM) Roadmap, developed in collaboration with state agencies and stakeholders. This roadmap reflects a holistic, long-term approach to managing pests while protecting human health, the environment, and the economy. Caltrans' existing Integrated Vegetation Management Plan aligns with these efforts. Furthermore, earlier this year, I signed Assembly Bill 2113 (Chapter 60, Statutes of 2024), codifying California's commitment to sustainable pest management.



Moreover, these requirements would result in millions of ongoing costs that were not accounted for in the 2024 Budget Act. In partnership with the Legislature this year, my Administration has enacted a balanced budget that avoids deep program cuts to vital services and protected investments in education, health care, climate, public safety, housing, and social service programs that millions of Californians rely on. It is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom