

Environment & Energy

# End Planet-Warming Pesticide Use, California Air Regulator Urged

By Zach Bright

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- Environmental groups want sulfuryl fluoride phaseout
  - The pesticide has a high global warming potential
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California's top air regulator was urged to phase out an insecticide for its potent greenhouse gas warming effects and harms to human health in a legal petition filed Thursday by environmental groups.

The Center for Biological Diversity and Californians for Pesticide Reform want the California Air Resources Board to start rulemaking on sulfuryl fluoride, a neurotoxin, to phase out its use. The pesticide is used to kill a wide range of pests, including bed bugs, termites, rats, and mice.

"Dangerous fumigants like sulfuryl fluoride pose a grave threat to public health and global warming and we need state air resource officials to act now," said Jane Sellen, co-director of Californians for Pesticide Reform.

The petition also seeks to add the substance to California's greenhouse gas emission inventory to improve monitoring.

The California Air Resources Board didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Sulfuryl fluoride is 4,800 times more potent than carbon dioxide in trapping heat, and it lasts in the atmosphere for 36 years, eight times longer than once thought, the groups said in the petition.

California is among the world's largest consumers, according to the petition. More than 3 million pounds of the gas were applied in the state in 2021.

The petition noted that viable alternatives exist, including heating affected areas or using microwaves and electric pulses.

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