

SPRAYING

From page 1

really here haven't seen," said Sandra Ward, an organic farmer from Aptos. "It's not around. It's kind of like mythic proportions."

But State Secretary of Agriculture A.G. Kawamura disagreed.

"The discussions have shown that this is a very safe product," he said. "The main issue seems to be the displeasure of the aerial spraying."

Kawamura added that the state did investigate alternative options for distributing the pesticide, but the best alternative was dispersal by airplane. He stressed that fighting the moth was essential, and that delays in spraying will be a setback for eradication efforts.

"This is a pest that threatens both the environmental and the food systems," he said. "Invasive species is one of the biggest challenges we will face in our lifetimes."

Kawamura urged the board to refrain from supporting the resolution, and he said if the state sprays now, it will interrupt the current breeding cycle of the moth. He said taking action against the LBAM will help protect the state's food supply,

and he had strong words against the resolution.

"This is a public process, and I don't believe your resolution is well timed or adequately informed," he said.

Kawamura pointed to the success of eradication efforts of the gypsy moth 10 years ago.

"If we had left because there was a protest then, the provable results of a gypsy moth infestation would have left you potentially vulnerable, with tremendous deforestation," he said.

Several times throughout the meeting, the board members had to reprimand protesters whose outbursts interrupted the proceedings.

The resolution, penned by supervisors Neal Coonerty and Mark Stone, stated opposition to the spraying until the state hires independent experts to study the pheromone, and declare it safe for humans, animals and the environment.

The resolution also asks the state to provide a full disclosure of all the ingredients in the spray, and requests that the state employ "less invasive" methods of LBAM control until an environmental impact report has been completed.

Supervisor Ellen Pirie requested the language of the resolution be changed to include

a prohibition of spraying over urban areas.

Supervisor Tony Campos said that the board doesn't need a resolution to make its point, and expressed concern that the document would bind them to a course of action despite any new findings about the spray.

"If we had a less invasive alternative, we'd be looking at it now," he said.

Several residents worried that the resolution is not legally binding, and requested that the supervisors consider a lawsuit against the state to add strength to the resolution.

"We're imploring you, as the people that can, to take legal action against this," said Emily Morris, a horticulturalist, "to implore that they take the alternative route, and that they don't spray."

But Pirie reminded the audience that similar legal action in Monterey County was unsuccessful last week. A Monterey County Superior Court judge temporarily blocked pheromone treatments in Monterey County, only to give the green light to continued spraying there. Another round of spraying is scheduled to take place Nov. 4-9 over parts of Salinas and large swaths of Santa Cruz County north of Watsonville.