



Dan Coyro/Sentinel file

Some county residents chose to be bused to shelters outside the county rather than stay in town during aerial malathion spraying when a Mediterranean fruit fly infestation threatened Santa Cruz County in 1981.

Some residents say they'll leave town for moth spraying

Light Brown Apple Moth

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History has a way of repeating itself.

Dozens of Santa Cruz County residents say they plan to leave town this week now that it's all but certain that a trio of state-owned planes will start spraying a obscure pesticide to fight the light brown apple moth, as early as Monday night.

An exodus occurred more than two decades ago, when the state enlisted helicopters to spray malathion in much of northern Santa Cruz County. Then, in the last week of August 1981, it was the Mediterranean fruit fly the state was after. At the time, local residents, incredulous that the state had the power to do such a thing, boarded buses that made a beeline out of town as helicopters were getting ready to fly.

The thinking then was eerily similar to what's going on now.

Residents didn't trust the state. Nor did