



# AB 652

## ASSEMBLYMEMBER ALEX LEE

### THIS BILL

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AB 652 requires, by January 1, 2025, the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to convene an Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) consisting of community members from around the state that are disproportionately impacted by pesticide use. In order to reduce the racial and socioeconomic disparities of the impacts of pesticide exposure, the EJAC will advise DPR on ways to integrate environmental justice considerations into DPR's programs, policies, decision-making and activities.

### BACKGROUND

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DPR, under the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), is tasked with, "protect[ing] human health and the environment by regulating pesticide sales and use, and by fostering reduced-risk pest management." While pesticide use disproportionately impacts people of color and of lower income, currently DPR has few, if any, consistent, accessible, ongoing processes for members of these communities to meaningfully engage on DPR's many programs and processes.

### PROBLEM

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Scientists have linked pesticide exposure to both acute and chronic human health impacts, including an increased risk of certain cancers, neurodevelopmental toxicity, birth defects, respiratory illness, endocrine disruption, and reproductive harm. Studies show that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, as well as people living in low-income communities, are disproportionately exposed to pesticides in both rural and urban settings. For example, in California, more than 95% of all pesticide use in the state occurs in the 60% of the zip codes that have the highest proportion of residents of color. Also, almost three out of every four children in California with the highest potential for exposure to pesticides at school were non-Anglo, and Hispanic children were also 91% more likely than white children to attend school where the highest amount of pesticides of human health concern were used nearby.

Despite these disproportionate impacts, DPR has no consistent, formalized, accessible mechanisms for public feedback or oversight that crosses over its range of programs, particularly from the communities most impacted by pesticide use. Creating an EJAC with public meetings (similar to that housed at the California Air Resources Board), is a step to address this issue.

### SOLUTION

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This bill requires, on or before January 1, 2025, DPR to convene an EJAC composed of up to 15 members, including environmental justice leaders, Native American or tribal groups, farmworker advocates, socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers, and agroecologists or biologists with an environmental justice background. These members will represent communities throughout the state.

Under the bill, DPR will appoint the EJAC members from nominations received from environmental justice organizations and community groups. In order to support equitable participation, EJAC members will receive a per diem allowance and may be reimbursed for actual and necessary travel expenses incurred in connection with their official duties.

The bill requires the EJAC to formally review the activities and programs under DPR, and to provide recommendations to DPR on ways to integrate environmental justice considerations into DPR's programs, policies, decision making, and activities, and on how DPR can improve its communication with communities with the most significant exposure to pesticides. The bill then requires DPR to respond to these recommendations.

Overall, the EJAC will provide advice and recommendations about broad, cross-cutting issues related to environmental justice from a diverse set of stakeholders involved in the environmental justice dialogue. In addition, the EJAC will provide a valuable forum for meaningful consideration of recommendations from environmental justice community members about DPR's priorities and initiatives. The ultimate goal of the EJAC is to improve the environment and public health in communities disproportionately burdened by the harms and risks of pesticide use.

### SUPPORT

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Californians for Pesticide Reform (Sponsor)  
Pesticide Action Network (Sponsor)  
Safe Ag, Safe Schools (Sponsor)

### CONTACT

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