

Note:

This letter was written on Mother's Day as both a tribute to mothers across the United States and a reminder of the profound role they are playing in demanding accountability from our institutions in response to the growing chronic illness burden facing our children. Today, that concern extends beyond our homes and schools to the poisoning of our forests and public lands.

Dear Ms. Schroeder, Mr. Mishler, and Mr. Lyon,

I am writing as a pediatrician, public health advocate, and concerned Californian regarding the proposed use of herbicides, including glyphosate-based formulations, within the Caldor Fire Restoration Project in the Lake Tahoe Basin where public reports have suggested treatment plans involving up to approximately 75,000 acres of national forest land. Like many members of the public, I recognize the complexity of post-fire forest management and the importance of ecological restoration. However, I am deeply concerned about the large-scale use of herbicides in one of the nation's most ecologically sensitive and publicly treasured landscapes, particularly given ongoing scientific and public debate surrounding glyphosate exposure, watershed impacts, biodiversity loss, and long-term ecosystem resilience.

I recently published a public commentary discussing these concerns and the growing public scrutiny surrounding herbicide-dependent forest management practices. The article is attached/shared below for your review.

My purpose in contacting you is not to inflame conflict, but to make it clear that many physicians, scientists, environmental advocates, parents, and outdoor recreation communities are now paying close attention to this project and similar herbicide programs throughout California.

Specifically, I respectfully request:

1. Full public transparency regarding:
 - the acreage proposed for herbicide treatment,
 - the chemicals and formulations being considered,
 - application methods,
 - drift mitigation strategies,
 - watershed monitoring plans,
 - and long-term ecological impact assessments.
2. Clarification regarding the scientific literature and risk assessments being relied upon in support of these applications, including whether independent review of the underlying safety literature has been conducted.
3. Greater public consideration of non-chemical restoration alternatives, including mechanical thinning, manual vegetation management, and prescribed fire where appropriate.
4. Public disclosure of how impacts on recreation areas, watersheds, wildlife corridors, pollinators, and surrounding communities will be monitored over time.

Lake Tahoe and the surrounding forests are not merely management zones; they are living ecosystems and public trust resources relied upon by millions of Californians and visitors for recreation, clean water, wildlife habitat, and health.

Additional concern arises from the long-term observations and published work associated with the superlative work of wildlife rehabilitator and biologist Judy Hoy, (now deceased) in Montana's Bitterroot Valley and surrounding western ecosystems. Over decades, Hoy and collaborators documented unusual developmental and reproductive abnormalities in wildlife populations coinciding with substantial increases in regional agrichemical use, including glyphosate-based herbicides. These concerns were later summarized in her 2017 book, *Changing Faces: The Consequences of Exposure to Gene and Thyroid Disrupting Toxins*. While these observations do not alone establish direct causation, they raise serious ecological questions deserving of independent investigation,

particularly when large-scale herbicide applications are proposed near sensitive alpine watersheds, wildlife corridors, and recreation regions relied upon by families and children.

Also of grave importance is the decades-long investigative and advocacy work of environmental activist Carol Van Strum in the forests of Oregon, where extensive aerial herbicide spraying programs were conducted across timberlands and surrounding rural communities. In her book *A Bitter Fog: Herbicides and Human Rights*, Van Strum documented reports from residents, families, and independent observers describing concerns about chemical drift, contaminated water sources, wildlife decline, and potential health effects following repeated forestry herbicide applications. While many of these accounts remain the subject of ongoing scientific and regulatory debate, her work contributed to a greater national scrutiny regarding aerial spraying practices, environmental oversight, and the adequacy of long-term health and ecological monitoring in forest management regions. In light of this history, proposals for additional large-scale herbicide use in ecologically sensitive public lands warrant heightened transparency, precaution, and independent review.

As a pediatrician with more than four decades of clinical experience, and as co-author of the book *What's Making Our Children Sick?*, I have witnessed a profound and troubling rise in chronic inflammatory, neurodevelopmental, autoimmune, allergic, and metabolic conditions in children over the course of my career. While no single environmental factor can fully explain these trends, it is increasingly difficult to ignore the cumulative burden of chemical exposures now present throughout our food systems, water systems, and ecosystems. For many physicians caring for children, these concerns are no longer theoretical or abstract; they are visible daily in our clinics, schools, and communities. This reality is precisely why precaution, transparency, and independent scientific oversight must remain central to decisions involving widespread environmental chemical applications on public lands.

One must also take into account the ongoing national debates surrounding pesticide liability protections and regulatory preemption efforts involving glyphosate-based herbicides. At a time when courts, legislators, scientists, and the public continue to question whether existing regulatory frameworks adequately protect human and environmental health, proposals for expanded herbicide use on public lands deserve heightened scrutiny, transparency, and independent oversight.

Regardless of differing viewpoints on herbicide use, I believe the public deserves open communication, scientific transparency, and meaningful engagement before widespread chemical applications proceed in these landscapes.

Please consider this letter a respectful notice that the public is watching these decisions carefully and expects accountability grounded in independent science and environmental stewardship. This correspondence is being shared with hundreds of members of the scientific, medical, environmental, legislative, and public advocacy communities concerned about watershed protection, forest stewardship, and public health.

I would appreciate any additional public documents, environmental assessments, or clarification your offices are able to provide regarding the scope and oversight of this project. Experience has shown that concern is warranted, especially regarding large-scale herbicide use and the negative impacts on our children and future generations. Children are not simply "small adults"; their developing neurological, endocrine, immune, and detoxification systems are uniquely vulnerable to environmental exposures. Even when regulatory agencies deem exposure levels acceptable, the cumulative and long-term effects of repeated low-dose environmental chemical exposure remain an area of active scientific concern. In regions such as the Lake Tahoe Basin, where families gather specifically for recreation, clean air, snowpack, and outdoor health, precaution and transparency should be held to the highest standard possible.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michelle Perro

<https://michelleperromd337477.substack.com/p/the-zombie-science-poisoning-our>