



Media Release

Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group Pesticides Subcommittee wins 2023 award for water quality advocacy

San Francisco Water Board annually recognizes leaders in pollution prevention

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OAKLAND – The [Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group \(BAPPG\)](#) Pesticides Subcommittee has been named the winner of the 2023 Dr. Teng-chung Wu [Pollution Prevention Award](#) for its outreach and advocacy activities to reduce pesticides in stormwater and municipal wastewater.

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board presents this award annually in memory of Dr. Teng-chung Wu, a former Water Board employee and early advocate for pollution prevention. He believed many pollutants could be more effectively eliminated by controlling their sources rather than relying on end-of-pipe treatment. The efforts of BAPPG, a subcommittee of Bay Area Clean Water Agencies, to tackle the impacts of pesticides reflect Dr. Wu's philosophy.

“We applaud the Pesticides Subcommittee for its dedication in tackling the pesticides in wastewater,” said Eileen White, Executive Officer of the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board. “Removing pesticides from wastewater at the end of the pipe would require an enormous investment in new technology that, frankly, would never be as effective as preventing pesticides from getting into the wastewater in the first place.”

Since stormwater systems and wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove pesticides, pesticides can end up in creeks, rivers, bays, and oceans, potentially creating toxic environments for aquatic life. They can also disrupt wastewater treatment. The most effective way to prevent pesticides from harming water quality is to eliminate or reduce their release to the environment through effective pesticides management, including minimal use and responsible application.

Wastewater agencies cannot regulate pesticide products directly — only the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation regulate pesticide applications. Thus, the subcommittee advocates for evidence-based regulation that protects water quality by considering urban pesticide use, indoor pesticide use, and down-the-drain pathways.



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The sustained effort of the Pesticides Subcommittee has improved pesticide regulations at both state and federal levels. Regulations (e.g., approved pesticide labels, including better directions for proper use and disposal) better account for pathways pesticides can take to reach surface waters and minimize water quality impacts.

The Regional Water Board recognizes the Pesticides Subcommittee's tenacity on this challenging issue and its creative approach to making change.

The mission of the San Francisco Bay Water Board is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources for the protection of the environment, public health and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.