

**George Jacobsen**  
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**Date:** May 2, 2025

**To:**  
Cade Mohler, Managing Director  
Ruth Morentz, Board Chair  
Lassen Fire Safe Council

**Subject:** Responsibility for Unlicensed Pesticide Activity by Kyle Herron

Dear Mr. Mohler and Ms. Morentz,

This letter follows my formal inquiry to Mr. Kyle Herron and is addressed to you in your capacities as executive and board leadership of the Lassen Fire Safe Council. You have been previously copied on multiple communications regarding Mr. Herron's role in pesticide planning, his licensure status, and LFSC's refusal to provide any documentation verifying the qualifications of staff engaged in regulated chemical advising.

As confirmed through public records, CDPR license data, and Kyle Herron's own communications, Mr. Herron acted in the role of a Pest Control Adviser (PCA) well before he held any license to do so. He provided detailed herbicide recommendations, issued chemical guidance to landowners, and participated in CEQA-governed vegetation planning for LFSC without possessing a PCA license until March 11, 2025. His PCA License No. 169147 was issued less than 24 hours after I submitted a formal inquiry to Mr. Mohler questioning whether he was licensed. While it is technically possible this timing was coincidental, it raises a legitimate question as to whether the license was rushed through administratively in an attempt to retroactively cover for Mr. Herron's unlicensed conduct and shield LFSC from exposure. If it is determined that LFSC leadership—including Mr. Mohler—was aware of Mr. Herron's unlicensed activity and intentionally expedited licensure only after my inquiry, this would constitute not only a regulatory failure but also a knowing concealment of misconduct. In that case, we are no longer discussing oversight failures but an orchestrated cover-up to preserve LFSC's legal and financial standing while operating in violation of state law. This fact, in itself, raises serious questions about prior conduct and subsequent damage control.

Additionally, Mr. Herron's communications from as early as January 2024 show he was centrally involved in determining herbicide mixes used in field operations. In one February 2025 email, he recommended combinations of glyphosate, triclopyr, and other chemicals for post-treatment use — advice that constitutes regulated activity under California law. Verbal accounts confirm he was making such recommendations months earlier. Despite all of this, LFSC refused to confirm whether Mr. Herron or any other personnel held valid licenses. In fact, when I directly asked whether Mr. Herron was licensed, Cade Mohler failed to answer plainly. Instead, Mr. Mohler responded with evasive language about PCA participation and speculative lists of possible herbicides, without disclosing that Mr. Herron had no license at the time. This deflection is

documented in the March 26, 2025 response written by Cade Mohler, which cited PCA involvement and chemical label compliance while deliberately omitting the fact that Kyle Herron's PCA license did not yet exist until March 11, 2025 the day after my inquiry was submitted. This is not how a "grassroots," "community-driven," or transparent nonprofit operates. This is how a deliberately evasive, privately-aligned, and structurally compromised organization behaves when it prioritizes protection of internal actors over public accountability. Rather than disclosing the truth, your leadership chose to obscure it, allowing a now-proven legal violation to remain unaddressed until forced into the open by public records. That is the language of concealment, not community trust. The pattern and tone of Mr. Mohler's March 26 response suggests not mere incompetence, but intent — intent to mislead, deflect, and quietly distance LFSC from a liability you knew or should have known existed. This response now appears to be part of a coordinated attempt to conceal that he was operating illegally. If any LFSC director or administrator was aware of Mr. Herron's unlicensed status and still permitted him to advise landowners or contribute to chemical plans, that constitutes complicity in unlawful activity, and possibly fraud under state law.

Now that this has been publicly and legally confirmed, I am asking directly: what is your response as LFSC leadership? You are both responsible for ensuring that LFSC's field operations are compliant with pesticide law, CEQA, nonprofit governance standards, and public health expectations.

If you did not know Mr. Herron was unlicensed during that time, it suggests a complete breakdown in organizational oversight. If you did know, and allowed it to continue, that raises more serious questions of liability and intent. Either outcome is unacceptable for a publicly funded organization tasked with chemical vegetation treatment near homes, water sources, and communities.

The legal, financial, and reputational implications of this pattern are now unavoidable. Mr. Herron's involvement in multiple CEQA-covered projects while unlicensed could expose LFSC to:

- Legal liability for advising private landowners, homeowners, or contractors without a valid license, especially in cases where herbicide use may have caused property damage, drift exposure, or environmental contamination;
- Legal liability for any property where herbicide was applied or advised under his direction;
- Regulatory penalties for submitting or using work product from an unlicensed pesticide adviser;
- Audit flags and clawback of state or federal grant funding tied to those projects, particularly if such funds were used in reliance on unlicensed recommendations;
- Revocation or suspension of LFSC's eligibility for future public funding;
- Potential exposure to charges of conspiracy or fraud if LFSC leadership is found to have knowingly concealed or facilitated unlawful pesticide activity.

Moreover, because Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District (HLVRCD) served as the CEQA lead agency on many of these projects, its certifications may also be compromised —

particularly if it can be shown that HLVRCD received or acted upon any chemical recommendations or project planning materials that originated with Mr. Herron or Lassen Fire Safe Council during the period when he or LFSC were operating without proper pesticide licensure. At this stage, we do not yet know the full extent of Mr. Herron's influence on HLVRCD filings or interagency coordination. However, if such links are confirmed, it could trigger multi-agency scrutiny, including CEQA violations, funding review, and lead agency accountability.

You are now on formal notice that a pattern of unlicensed pesticide activity occurred under your leadership. What steps will you take to address this? Will LFSC:

- Acknowledge that Mr. Herron acted without a license prior to March 11?
- Identify and document all projects affected by his unlicensed recommendations?
- Notify affected landowners and public agencies that regulated chemical planning was performed by an unlicensed individual?
- Submit corrections to CEQA documentation or public reports that incorporated Mr. Herron's work product?

The public deserves a clear answer. I strongly suggest that LFSC take immediate steps to conduct an internal audit and prepare formal disclosures. If LFSC chooses to remain silent or defensive, this matter will continue to escalate.

Respectfully,

George Jacobsen

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“This matter is now being documented in coordination with legal observers, environmental researchers, and public interest monitors tracking pesticide and CEQA compliance across California.”

Legal Notice:

This communication is made pursuant to my rights under the California Constitution (Article I, §3(b)), the California Public Records Act (Government Code § 6250 et seq.), and related state and federal environmental oversight laws. It concerns matters of public interest, public health, and the lawful use of state and federal funds. Any attempt to characterize this protected oversight activity as harassment or intimidation will be treated as retaliatory and may trigger legal protections under California's anti-SLAPP statute (Code of Civil Procedure § 425.16).