



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 99-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 25, 2019

To: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair

Re: **SB 853** – Relating to pesticides, prohibits chlorpyrifos – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon positions affirm that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems, and that pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health, and that agriculture policies should promote farm practices that are environmentally sound.

SB 853 bans the purchase, sale, and use of chlorpyrifos and list neonicotinoids as restricted use pesticides. Chlorpyrifos and neonicotinoids are hazardous pesticides with severe unintentional human and environmental health impacts.

Chlorpyrifos is a toxic nerve agent pesticide that can impact neural development in children, babies, and fetuses (Rotenburg 2003, Qiao 2003). They can persist in the environment, where they are very toxic to many bird species, fish, aquatic invertebrates, and key pollinators such as bees (NPIC 2010).

Neonicotinoids are highly persistent in the environment and highly toxic to insects, including beneficial pollinators like bees, and must be restricted due to their contribution to the current massive loss of biodiversity (Goulson 2018). This legislation allows for continued use, but only after completing training in their use. Home use of neonicotinoids is often higher than agricultural use (Nicholls 2018), and as explained below, untrained use comes with a higher risk of improper application, storage, and disposal. Neonicotinoids are known to contaminate waterways in Oregon (Hladik 2016).

Pesticides are frequently misused, and this results in increased risk of these human and environmental health impacts. Even supporters of continuing use of these hazardous pesticides admit that misuse can pose significant risk, and that proper use merely reduces risk, not eliminates it. While labels are designed to communicate proper use and the risks of misuse, research shows that they are ineffective and confuse users (Dugger-Webster 2018). Non-technical users fail to understand proper application, storage, and disposal, highlighting the importance of ensuring that neonicotinoids are restricted to trained individuals. In particular, users do not understand proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), posing a greater risk for farmworkers, highlighting the failure of labels even for trained workers. A 2000 study by LWVOR found that farmworker exposure to pesticides is an ongoing concern in Oregon.

Home storage of pesticides like neonicotinoids poses an additional threat to resilience. During disasters such as floods or fires, the soup of hazardous chemicals stored in our home garages and sheds are released into the local environment. Limiting home use improves our ability to survive and recover from these disasters.

Many farmworkers, landscapers, and workers in parks and public works in Oregon have a Latino background and some have limited English, and certain key training materials and tests are currently only available in English, not Spanish. This creates a barrier to understanding the proper use, storage, and disposal of these hazardous chemicals. This increases the risk to these workers that they will contaminate themselves or their clothing and transport that contamination home to their families and communities.

We urge your support for SB 853 to protect public health and ensure the responsible and sustainable management of our natural resources and environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



Norman Turrill
LWVOR President



Amelia Nestler
LWVOR Pesticides/Toxics Portfolio

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