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OREGONIANS FOR FOOD & SHELTER

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A non-profit coalition to promote the efficient production of quality food and fiber while protecting human health, personal property and the environment, through the integrated, responsible use of pest management products, soil nutrients and biotechnology.

HB 2928— Relating to hazardous substances 3 April 2013 Testimony to House Committee on Healthcare

Honorable Committee Members:

Oregonians for Food & Shelter (OFS) is a grassroots coalition of farmers, foresters, and other technology users focused on natural resource issues involving pesticides, fertilizer, and biotechnology. We are writing you today in opposition to House Bill 2928 which would change the labeling requirements for products that come in contact with “hazardous substances”.

OFS fully agrees that people should be protected from unsafe levels of hazardous substances but House Bill 2928 adds a new burden to manufacturers and processors without protecting anybody. Our primary opposition to the bill is due to the impacts on food processors. Our members are always concerned about ensuring a strong local food processing industry in Oregon to add value to the products we grow. We are fearful that the new requirements for labeling at the state level would unnecessarily hurt our local processors.

Currently food packaging and labeling is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). These agencies have the expertise and available scientific data to make informed decisions regarding substances that come in contact with food. In fact, FDA has a scientific advisory board which evaluates these products to ensure there is no unreasonable risk of harm.

House Bill 2928 would put an additional level of regulation on food packaging, by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). As noted above, labeling and packaging is already regulated by a state and federal agency and their determinations should be sufficient. Adding another layer of regulation only places a larger burden on food processors. For example, under the new definition of hazardous substance in the bill, there is a scenario in which a product approved for use by the FDA could be considered unsafe by OHA. **This could greatly disadvantage Oregon processors over their out of state counterparts.**

Please oppose House Bill 2928 and leave the regulation of food packaging and labeling to the experts at FDA. Thank you for your consideration.

Scott J. Dahlman
Executive Director