



April 4, 2013

Senator Chris Edwards and Representative Ben Unger
Co-Chairs, Joint Ways & Means Natural Resources Subcommittee
Oregon State Capitol 900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Collaboration POP #320

Dear Senator Edwards and Representative Unger:

Oregon has the unique opportunity to effectively protect our rivers and watersheds by adopting a collaborative, community-led strategy to reduce pesticides in our waters. Waste pesticides can end up in our rivers, beyond their intended application or usefulness. This is true across all land uses, including urban areas, agricultural areas, forestlands, and near rights-of-way. In Oregon we have already demonstrated that we can protect our drinking water, salmon and watershed health through data-driven strategies that provide flexibility to landowners, and show measurable results in reducing pesticide run-off.

We ask you to enable Oregon to implement these win-win strategies by including Pesticide Stewardship Partnership POP #320 for \$1,497,305/biennium in the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) budgets.

Supporting Effective, Collaborative, Community-Led Strategies to Reduce Pesticides in Local Waterways

A Pesticide Stewardship Program will reduce pesticide run-off in our waters through two main voluntary strategies:

1. Pesticide Stewardship Partnerships

Pioneered here in Oregon, Pesticide Stewardship Partnerships have been effective in dramatically reducing pesticides found in local waters, and benefited land managers through training in more

effective, efficient pest control methods. Local land managers and community resource organizations team up with state experts at Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Oregon State University (OSU) to measure water quality and come up with voluntary solutions to improve it.

Land managers like the partnerships, because they get the benefits of our state's best expertise in pest, disease and weed control from OSU– and then they get to choose for themselves what techniques work best on their land.

Conservationists like the partnerships because they are so effective: two of the longest-running projects in the Hood River and Walla Walla Basins have reduced the detection levels of pesticides of concern (those above water quality standards or aquatic life benchmarks) in local waters by over 90%. Orchardists leading both projects say this approach works because it is collaborative, locally driven, and a practical way to avoid more costly regulation.

2. Community pesticide collection events

Community collection events are simple: a chance for pesticide users to safely and anonymously dispose of waste pesticides at no cost. Recent events have collected 30-50 thousand pounds of pesticides each – keeping them from leaking, spilling, or running off into waterways.

We support a statewide Pesticide Stewardship Program based on both strategies because we see that this is the most effective way to reduce pesticides that can inadvertently compromise both human and aquatic health. This approach:

- Effectively reduces pesticide pollution in a short timeframe;
- Uses locally appropriate solutions developed by community leaders in collaboration with state agencies and OSU, who bring monitoring data and new effective pest management strategies and tools to the table;
- Uses a voluntary approach that provides flexibility, rather than a regulatory approach that mandates specific practices;
- Costs the state less money to implement than a regulatory approach, while providing effective, data-driven results.

Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Collaboration Policy Option Package #320 in the ODA and DEQ budgets is comprised of half general funds and half existing pesticide registration fees. It will support:

- 1) Pesticide Stewardship Partnership projects in more than ten watersheds through:
 - a) Water sampling and analysis for pesticides by DEQ,
 - b) Tools and technical assistance through OSU for landowners to improve pest control efficacy and efficiency, and reduce runoff.
- 2) Pesticide Waste Collection Events in 4-5 communities a year.

We ask you to remove the statement in the Policy Option Package that “any decrease in General Funds would result in an equal reduction in Other Funds.” We simply ask that the Other Funds portion of the package have the opportunity to remain stable and not be redirected to other purposes. We are not asking for an increase in Other Funds to cover any reductions in General Fund. A stable source of funding for the critical elements of this strategy – especially monitoring – is essential to its credibility and success, and we are concerned that any future cuts to General Funds would mothball the entire program under this requirement since an equal reduction in Other Funds would be required.

We support this important budget package, and hope you will too.