



# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, Governor

**Oregon Commission for Women**  
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Testimony in support of HB 3364, March 28, 2013, 8:00 AM  
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

Chair Witt and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning House Bill 3364, the plan for agency coordination for Oregon's State Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy.

The members of the Oregon Commission for Women strongly support passage of HB 3364. We believe pesticides and their inherent toxicity and widespread use, pose a serious threat to public health - particularly to infants, children, and pregnant women.

Children and infants are uniquely susceptible to the effects of pesticides because of their physiological immaturity and greater exposure to pesticides. Some studies suggest that exposure to pesticides may compromise the immune system of infants and children and exacerbate their risk of infection and disease.<sup>1</sup>

Two to four percent of live born children have congenital birth defects, and although much remains unknown about possible causes, environmental agents, such as pesticides are an important risk factor.<sup>2</sup> Although information is limited, available studies suggest that depending on when and to what extent exposure occurs, pesticides may alter the growth, development, and acquisition of normal organ function. A few studies suggest that in selected instances, maternal exposure to certain pesticides may cause birth defects including anencephaly (incomplete bone development in the skull), cleft palate, limb malformations, biliary atresia (missing or underdeveloped bile ducts), heart defects, and facial and eye deformities.<sup>3</sup> Many studies have also suggested that babies born to mothers exposed to pesticides are more likely to have smaller head circumference, lower birth weight, lower IQ, higher risk of neurological and reproductive disorders.<sup>4</sup> Public concern about children's exposure to pesticides is warranted. In 1991, Oregon was an early adopter of [Integrated Pest Management](#) (IPM), a proven method of managing pests while reducing reliance on pesticides. The law required state agencies to convene an Integrated Pest Management Coordinating Committee; ten years later, the State IPM program was abolished.

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(Sections 8-11 of [Chapter 413 Oregon Laws 2001](#)). This resulted in the absence of a coordinated policy for public government institutions. Then, in 2009, Oregon passed the School IPM Law, one of the strongest pesticide protection laws in the nation. However, the State *has not* set policy, established guidelines, coordinated or implemented pesticide reduction strategies for state agencies on public land.<sup>4</sup> Guaranteeing health protection from pesticide exposures at public facilities is also a matter of justice for the most vulnerable Oregonians.

IPM is science-based and it is a smart and effective use of pesticides so that chemical is not overused, wasted or used inappropriately. Oregon State University is one of the nation's premier research institutions for pest management and would be a viable source to effectively and efficiently provide training to the state agencies.

Passing legislation to reinstate State IPM policy and coordination activities is a scientific and proactive strategy to ensure safe public places for all Oregonians, and to earn the public's trust. The State has a responsibility to protect the public, particularly women and children, from harm from toxic chemicals in the environment.  
Please vote aye on HB 3364!

Respectfully submitted,

*Mariahm Stephenson*

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Oregon Commission for Women