

Dear Honorable Chair Dembrow and Senate Members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

December 7, 2014

Dear Honorable Michael Dembrow and Senators:

One of the few “upsides” of aging is that those of us now over 65 have had the opportunity to develop a perspective based on decades of experiences.

I have lived in the Coast Range of Oregon since the late 1970's. In 1982 I experienced a drift of aerially applied Garlon from a clear cut on a high slope just less than a mile away. I immediately called the Department of Forestry and was told in no uncertain terms that I was mistaken, the herbicides are applied in such a way that the chemicals go only to the target area and I must have been smelling something else. At this point I began my research into forestry chemicals and became the area go-to guy for people who had experienced spray drift or direct exposures of aerially applied herbicides.

What I can tell you with absolute and documented certainty is that over more than 30 years the stories have become routinely the same. An early case, a neighbor called to ask me how to get an herbicide spray off of his car and was concerned that the spray might have ruined his paint. He said that the school bus in front of him had been sprayed also. I called the Department of Agriculture and the follow up investigation identified the sprays on the vehicles and the helicopter pilot received a warning.

Over more than 30 years there have been countless landowners who have called me about their exposure to sprays that have drifted to their properties, their homes, pets, water supplies. We make the initial phone calls to the Oregon Department of Forestry who may or may not send someone out to look for signs of over spray and in some cases these are referred to the Department of Agriculture who may or may not follow up. In some cases the presence of chemicals is acknowledged but frequently in “insignificant amounts” and that is the end of it.

I have submitted testimony to the Board of Forestry regarding these spray exposure incidents as well as cited the ongoing, available research on herbicide toxicity to salmon and aquatic ecosystems. I have spoken with individual Board members and have had meetings with ODF staff. The Board of Forestry has received significant feedback from communities asking to have herbicide spraying ranked as a priority study through the Issues Scan community feedback process.

The result of these many years of presenting the data of exposures, of scientific research, ongoing feedback from outraged individuals, communities and organizations is that there have been **NO CHANGES TO THE FOREST PRACTICES ACT CHEMICAL RULES OVER THE LAST 30 YEARS** (except for REMOVING buffers around house).

This 30 year history is a very clear statement that changes to the Forest Practices Act will not happen through the Board of Forestry. The protection of public health and the protection of our iconic salmon and their aquatic ecosystem will have to come through the wisdom of the legislature, or it may finally come through drastic litigation that holds the entire system culpable. Many of us are counting on our representatives to make an unbiased assessment of the impacts of the Forest Practices Act and direct a reluctant Board of Forestry to implement long need and overdue changes.

Sincerely,
David Eisler, Ph.D.