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To: Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Rhett Lawrence, Sierra Club, Oregon Chapter

Date: March 12, 2019

RE: Senate Bill 853

Chair Dembrow and members of the Committee: My name is Rhett Lawrence and I'm the Conservation Director for the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club. On behalf of the more than 25,000 Sierra Club members in Oregon, I am pleased to submit these comments in support of Senate Bill 853.

As an organization with a long history of working to protect public health and wildlife in Oregon, we believe the common-sense protections of Senate Bill 853 are worthy of your support. As you know, SB 853 would prohibit the use and sale of the insecticide *chlorpyrifos* in Oregon and would restrict use of neonicotinoid pesticides to licensed pesticide applicators. Both of these actions would be beneficial to Oregonians and to the natural environment in our state.

Chlorpyrifos is a highly toxic organophosphate insecticide that is used on a wide variety of crops, putting farmworkers and fish and wildlife at risk. The federal Environmental Protection Agency had undertaken an effort to ban chlorpyrifos use on food crops several years ago, but abandoned that work under pressure from chemical companies. Though the EPA acknowledged the devastating effects the chemical is likely to have on endangered fish, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, and plants, there seems to be no further action planned at the federal level. Now it is time for Oregon to step up and ban this highly toxic insecticide.

Neonicotinoids are widely used pesticides that are wreaking havoc in our environment, with particularly grave impacts on pollinators. Many Oregonians first were made aware of the awful effects of neonics several years ago when at least 25,000 bumblebees were killed in a single application in a Target parking lot in Wilsonville. And for that one highly visible incident, there are hundreds of others we don't hear about. And neonics have similar impacts on birds and on the insects and other invertebrates that birds depend on for food.

This bill's provisions to classify neonicotinoids as "restricted use" in Oregon would allow for their continued use, but would require applicators to receive training and certification on how to do so safely. Oregon currently requires certification and training in order to buy or use over 500 other pesticides. Adding neonics to this list is a common-sense step to minimize the risk of harm to bees and

to the rest of us. There's simply no good reason for private citizens to be able to buy these products off the store shelf without any sense of how to use them properly.

For these reasons, the Sierra Club strongly supports Senate Bill 853 and we urge Committee members to do the same. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this testimony and please let me know if I may be of any further assistance to the committee.