

**OREGON WHEAT GROWERS LEAGUE**

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Blake Rowe, Chief Executive Officer

**TO: Rep. Brad Witt, Chair, Committee on Natural Resources
Members of the Committee**

**FR: Blake Rowe
CEO, Oregon Wheat Growers League**

RE: Oppose HB 3044

The Oregon Wheat Growers League (OWGL) is proud to represent the nearly 2000 farms across Oregon that produce wheat, one of our State's largest and most valuable crops. Wheat contributes hundreds of millions of dollars in direct and indirect value to Oregon's economy, especially Oregon's rural economy.

OWGL is strongly opposed to HB 3044 because it is **duplicative and unnecessary**. The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), not the Department of Environmental (DEQ), has designated authority to regulate pesticides in Oregon. ODA has expertise in pesticides, investigatory staff and civil penalty authority for misapplications. Following new education, training and certification standards for aerial applicators enacted by the 2015 Legislature, just three aerial applicators have received civil penalties. The program is effective, provides good quality information to the public on pesticides, is responsive to complaints, and conducts quality investigations based on good data and field inspections.

In contrast to the ODA program, HB 3044 **creates concern without due diligence**. The bill requires DEQ to send notice to affected properties when DEQ determines the records indicate products drifted beyond an application site. No agency can make any credible determination based solely on records, alarming Oregonians without merit. Today, assessments rely on real-time observations, in-person consultations and investigations routinely conducted by ODA. Moreover, pesticide drift is already illegal, and ODA strictly follows a robust investigatory framework for receiving and investigating complaints and penalizing applicators who break the law.

In addition, HB 3044 puts **the safety of farmers and applicators at risk**. Within fourteen days after receiving application information, DEQ will put the details of the application on a public website including specific property locations, the name of the applicator and the name and address of operator or company. This puts applicators, farmers, and landowners at risk of harassment and vandalism.

In this time of limited state resources there is no reason to create a duplicative regulatory program as proposed in HB 3044, especially one that is virtually certain to be less effective than the current pesticide program at ODA. We hope you will join us in opposing HB 3044.