

March 26, 2019

State of Oregon House of Representatives

House Committee on Natural Resources

Representative Brad Witt, Chair

Representative Chris Gorsek, Vice-Chair

Representative Sherrie Sprenger, Vice-Chair

Representative Greg Barreto

Representative Caddy McKeown

Representative Jeff Reardon

Representative David Brock Smith

Re: Comments on House Bill 3044

Chair Witt, Vice-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 3044 as a professional forester with more than 20 years of forest management in western Oregon. House Bill 3044 creates a broad outline of new oversight authority within the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. Currently, the Oregon Department of Agriculture has authority to oversee pesticide use, require record keeping, and provide for expeditious investigation if called upon by an applicator or member of the public. HB 3044 adds complex reporting requirements for the aerial application of pesticides, fertilizer, soil amendments, etc. just about anything that is applied across Oregon forested and agricultural lands with requirements that are not attainable with technology in use today.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has a staff uniquely equipped and trained to investigate misapplications of pesticides and other products. I have personal experience with ODA investigations, the process, expertise and follow-through their staff exercises. ODA is currently well positioned to witness applications, at the request of applicators or adjacent neighbors, investigate misapplications and provide judgment as needed based on real evidence. HB 3044 would undermine ODA's boots on the ground work through creating an office process determining there may have been a misapplication. The same neighbor that I have already contacted to discuss an application will receive a letter from Oregon DEQ that I have done something wrong after an office review? Sending a letter to my neighbor that I have drifted pesticide onto their land following an office process is nothing short of grossly irresponsible. This type of determination process would undermine my relationship with my neighbor and has the potential to create serious fear and conflict. HB 3044 creates a system that would harm neighbor relations without real evidence of a problem.

I urge you to oppose House Bill 3044 for the reasons I have outlined above.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ted Reiss', written over a horizontal line.

Ted Reiss – Professional Forester – Eugene, Oregon