

March 26, 2019

To: Chair and Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
From: Paloma Sparks, OBI
RE: OBI Testimony in Opposition to SB 853

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on this important issue for Oregon Business & Industry members. OBI is Oregon's most comprehensive business association representing approximately 1,600 businesses that employ nearly 330,000 people. We represent multiple sectors and serve as the state's Retail and Manufacturing Councils.

OBI opposes SB 853, which would re-classify neonicotinoid pesticides as restricted use pesticides, and also ban the use of pesticides containing chlorpyrifos. These pesticide products are heavily regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act and additionally reviewed through the Oregon Department of Agriculture's registration process. Banning the use of chlorpyrifos and classifying neonicotinoid products as restricted use pesticides is not supported by science and would result in harm to the production of Oregon agricultural products.

These pesticides have been safely used by Oregon farmers who also rely on native pollinators in the production of many of their crops. We are concerned that the designation of neonicotinoids as restricted use would require farmers to obtain pesticide applicator licenses when the products have not been shown to cause high risk to human health or the environment. The sudden change to a restricted use designation would necessitate significant changes to the certified applicator license program, which would be onerous to ODA. Neonicotinoids are currently under registration review by the EPA, a scientifically-rigorous, multi-year process, which examines the risks and benefits of a pesticide. The updated pollinator risk assessment and proposed interim decision will be published this spring as part of this process.

Chlorpyrifos is an important part of pest management programs. The use of chlorpyrifos varies from year to year and the decision to utilize this pesticide is made on a site-specific basis. Some crops have few pest control alternatives, which can result in severely diminished yields and dire economic consequences for farmers. In addition to diminished or disastrous impacts on crops, a chlorpyrifos ban would inhibit international trade of ag commodities, since the pesticide is widely used internationally and alternative pesticides may not be cleared in foreign markets. We would note that all neonicotinoids are also currently in EPA's registration review process and must be completed by a statutory deadline of October 1, 2022.

Neonicotinoids and chlorpyrifos are important components of pest control strategies. OBI urges the Committee to oppose SB 853 and allow the agencies charged with regulating pesticides and protecting human health and the environment, to examine the data and make the appropriate determination.

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