



To: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
From: Janaira Ramirez, Coalition Organizer
Re: SB 853 and HB 3058

Date: March 26, 2019

Dear Committee Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Olsen, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing testimony. My name is Janaira Ramirez and I am the Coalition Organizer for the Oregon Just Transition Alliance (OJTA). OJTA is a network of base-building, frontline-led organizations across Oregon, who came together to envision and advocate for a just transition to a regenerative economy, centering the voices of the communities who are most impacted by environmental racism, economic exploitation, and climate change.

A just transition ensures that those who grow and harvest the food that nourish our bodies have the adequate protection and resources to live long and healthy lifestyles. About 300,000 farmworkers in the U.S. are poised by pesticides each year, and the average age of a farmworker in the United States is only 49 years old, compared to the 78 years for all others in the U.S.¹ Many farmworkers lack health protections and benefits which put them at a disadvantage when addressing diseases caused by pesticides spraying and the many other health concerns that emerge from the strenuous labor and work environment without proper health and work protections. Chlorpyrifos is one of the pesticides that presents a great health risk for those who grow the food we eat, due to their direct interaction with the pesticide and crop harvesting, but it also affects all those Oregonians at the end of the supply chain who consume the harvested goods on our bountiful state. Chlorpyrifos, since it is a pesticide, damages the nervous system of surrounding pests as it is indented but more importantly, it attacks the human nervous system when exposed to the pesticide.² Exposure to chlorpyrifos is also linked to respiratory diseases, and developmental disorders in children.³

Neonics, another pesticide, is known for the harmful effects on bees, soil, and its lingering accumulation in our drinking water which violates our right to clean and safe drinking water. Bees, small but mighty creatures, uphold our ecosystem and bio diversity. They pollinate 30% of the food we eat across the country but unfortunately, there has been an increasing decline in bee population over the past decades; over 25% of honey bee populations have declined since the

¹ "The State of Farmworkers in California" Center for Farmworkers and Families, <http://www.farmworkerfamily.org/information>

² "Chlorpyrifos General Fact Sheet." National Pesticide Information Center, <http://npic.orst.edu/factsheets/chlorpge.html>

³ "Children's Exposure to Chlorpyrifos and Parathion in an Agricultural Community in Central Washington State." National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/abs/10.1289/ehp.02110549.

1990s.⁴ A continuing decline in the bee population has drastic effects on our ability to adequately feed our current and growing population. As a result, there will be a drastic change in the type of crops we will be able to grow in future years. We need make sure that our soil, pollinators, and water are safe for our current health and nutritional needs but also for the needs of generations to come. Bees are responsible for many the fruits, nuts, and some of the vegetables we eat. Climate change will exacerbate the harms to the bee population and it is our duty, your duty, to ensure that the mighty creatures who make food production possible are protected.

Committee members, it is your duty as our elected representatives to ensure that farmworkers, children, the foundations of our delicate ecosystem, and all Oregonians, are protected from the harmful effects of chlorpyrifos and neonics; this calls for a state wide ban on chlorpyrifos and strict restrictions on the purchase and the methods in which neonics are used. Neither of these pesticides are safe for human health in the current way they are being employed. They do not benefit to the health of our sacred soil, drinking water, or our precious pollinators. SB 853 and HB 3058 both ensure human health is prioritized and that the food and water we consume on a daily basis to nourish our bodies are safe for all those who work and live in Oregon. I hope you support SB 853 AND HB 3058. Thank you.

Janaira Ramirez

Coalition Organizer, Oregon Just Transition Alliance

⁴ "Bee Facts" National Resource Defense Council, <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/bees.pdf>