

3rd April 2019

Senator Dembrow

Senate Committee on The Environment and Natural Resources

Dear Senator Dembrow and Committee Members,

As a resident of Oceanside, Oregon, I am urging you to support Senate Bills 931 and 926. I am concerned about the risks associated with pesticide use in our watersheds, public drinking water supply and state recreation areas. In my mind, this is a public health issue. These bills would enable people to avoid pesticides on public state land and from drift on private lands.

A recent peer-reviewed article in the prestigious British Medical Journal (BMJ 2019;364:l962) looked into the incidence of autism in the children of mothers who live within 2 km of pesticide spraying. The study found a statistically significant increased risk for autism and especially autism with intellectual disability among children with prenatal exposure and even higher risk with both prenatal and post-natal exposure.

As a genetic counselor, I have advised numerous pregnant women to avoid substances whose safety has not been firmly established. You may recall a time when alcohol was thought to be harmless or stories of the profound birth defects associated with thalidomide use, which had been thought to be safe.

Now that there is evidence of risks for cancers and neurodevelopmental problems associated with pesticide use, it is critical that people know when and where the spraying will occur and how to avoid exposure.

Sincerely,

Pat Himes, M.S., C.G.C