

## Watts Remy

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**From:** Don St.Clair <GreenDogDemocrat@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 5, 2019 10:28 AM  
**To:** SENR Exhibits  
**Subject:** Vietnam and the unseen dangers of aerial herbicide defoliant spraying

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Dear committee members, please excuse the lateness of this email. I wanted to get this in by the deadline but was unable to. I think what I have to share is going to illuminate the gravity of your considerations on SB 926. I am both a former timber industry worker (wildland fire fighter) and personally affected by aerial pesticide application as the son of an Agent Orange disabled Vietnam veteran, and a professional in the broader health sector.

My late father, Lt. Colonel Edward St.Clair Jr, USAR Corps of Engineers, was a decorated disabled Vietnam veteran officer with a combined Agent Orange and PTSD based VA disability. He was the southernmost stationed US Army advisor in Vietnam in 1968 working in the Mekong Delta. Pursuant to learning more about Agent Orange, I learned much about the devastation Agent Orange caused and how that is being duplicated here in Oregon. Aerially sprayed defoliant containing such chemicals as 2,4-5D and it's contaminant, deadly dioxin, still widely used today, was used to kill broadleafed trees which gave visual cover to the enemy. The problem was, at exactly 68 degrees Fahrenheit, not more and not less, this chemical aerosolized. That means the droplets of 2,4-5D already on the ground would evaporate into the air and disperse far and wide before settling back down. Agent Orange contamination was found FIFTY miles off the coast of Vietnam contaminating shrimp harvesting beds at sea! Fundamentally, nearly all Vietnam veterans, to say nothing of millions of Vietnamese, were exposed to Agent Orange.

The same issue affects us here in Oregon. The chemicals that are aerially sprayed do not adhere to rigid boundary lines of timber harvest properties, just like websites touting lists of deerproof landscaping plants that deer will allegedly not eat have at the bottom the caveat, "warning, deer do not read this website."

And here is the problem with all herbicides when it comes to human health: they are what is called "estrogenomimetic." (Forgive me, I hope I am preaching to the choir.) That is, they are xenoestrogens, alien chemicals natural or synthetic that mimic the common human hormones known as estrogens. They have devastating hormonally disruptive effects, and it's all because plants lack arms to punch or feet to run. You see, plants have evolved natural chemicals to repel invaders to their immediate territory, natural hormonal chemicals that kill off other encroaching competitors for their tiny patch of ground, the only way they can, through chemistry. Hormones are nature's way of sending messages and having effects across a distance. Modern herbicides are based on these natural weedkillers.

The problem is of course when they are spread (and often spread where they were not intended) into the environment, they enter into human bodies and these xenoestrogens interfere and drastically affect natural hormonal processes, causing all sorts of chaos and havoc with internal human regulatory health systems and resulting, many scientists believe, in hormone disruption based diseases like breast and prostate cancer. (When the body is in a toxic overload state, it attempts to excrete the toxins anyway it can through any exocrine gland, such as the mammary glands or the prostate gland. Both breast milk and prostate fluid have been shown to have high loads of toxic chemicals.) Both of those cancers are more epidemic statistically in Oregon, I believe it has been shown. A doctor I spoke with likened life in Oregon to "swimming in a xenoestrogenic soup."

Regardless, we citizens have a constitutional right to life and liberty and certainly the right to exclude a private company's proprietary chemicals from our bodies should be fundamental to the law of the land. From a purely fiscal point of view, our state pays for it in the massive costs of healthcare public and private. Furthermore, other less harmful ways to treat timber production lands will increase available much needed jobs in the rural economy. Even herds of goats are being used for understory vegetation thinning management (and particularly for noxious plant management such as poison oak). In the state that apparently gave America goat yoga, this is a natural sequelae. Forgive my flippancy, but, I mean it sincerely. This is an issue that transcends conservative and liberal, libertarian and green points of view and needs to be addressed as such.

I am afraid my computer is rather old and outdated and too slow to manage citing studies to back up everything I have said, but online research will show the veracity of everything I have learned on this subject. My youngest brother has a rare developmental disability and such genetic abnormalities are epidemic in descendants of Agent Orange disabled Vietnam veterans, so it is a subject I have taken to heart and delved into with a mind towards evidence based analysis by such irrefutable sources as the US government, Veteran's Administration, and veteran's groups.

I appreciate your consideration of my testimony, given as the best of my understanding of this not so complex issue. It is high time we banned aerial herbicide spraying and practiced already existing safer techniques.

Sincerely,

Don St.Clair

Former Vice Chair of the Environmental Caucus, Democratic Party of Oregon