



Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Tim Knapp Supporting HB 2619-1:

Proposed Legislation Stops Use of Pesticides Shown to Cause Substantial Long-Term Environmental, Health and Economic Harm

Scheduled for public hearing on April 9, 2019, before the House Committee on Energy and Environment

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Schouten, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the City of Wilsonville City Council, I am testifying in support of HB 2619-1, which requires the Oregon Department of Agriculture to remove from use neonicotinoids and chlorpyrifos, pesticides found to have substantial long-term environmental, health and economic damages.

Wilsonville was the site in June 2013 of reportedly the largest pollinator bumble bee-kill in the history of the United States—a distinction that our community does not relish—due to the application of neonicotinoid pesticides by trained professional applicators. This powerful class of pesticides has been shown conclusively to harm pollinators throughout the life-cycle of the product, with detrimental effects continuing long after initial treatment since plants take-up the pesticide into their tissues.

The environmental impact of neonicotinoids has come under increasing scrutiny worldwide. In 2014, the European Union banned the use of three types of neonicotinoid pesticides in crops that attract bees.

In 2017, the National Marine Fisheries Service determined that chlorpyrifos jeopardizes the survival and recovery of all species of salmon and steelhead listed as endangered in Oregon, Washington and California. In 2018 the California Department of Pesticide Regulation released a scientific assessment that concluded that chlorpyrifos should be listed as a toxic air contaminant based on evidence of its neurological effects and exposure risks. Recognizing the harmful impacts, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was reportedly ready to ban this insecticide in 2017, but suddenly changed course in 2018. Subsequently, a federal court ordered the EPA to ban the use of chlorpyrifos; however, the EPA appealed that ruling, which was scheduled for a hearing in March 2019.

Many local, Wilsonville-area farming and nursery businesses are dependent upon pollinator health for propagation of key nut, fruit and vegetable crops. Pacific Natural Foods, a major national organic food-processor with substantial employment and operations in Tualatin and Wilsonville, is dependent on healthy populations of pollinators for successfully farming over 1,000 acres in the Willamette Valley.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture found that four separate bumble bee-kill incidents in 2013 and three separate bee-kill incidents in 2014 were due to applications of neonicotinoid pesticides.

The City notes that each of these pollinator-killing incidents was brought about by the use of neonicotinoid insecticides by duly licensed and trained professional pesticide applicators, demonstrating the extreme environmental impact of this powerful class of pesticides.

The City of Wilsonville respectfully urges a DO PASS vote on HB 2619-1. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tim Knapp, Mayor
City of Wilsonville