



House Committee on Rules

May 8, 2019

Oregon Farm Bureau OPPOSES House Bill 2619-A

The Oregon Farm Bureau Federation (“OFB”) is the state’s largest general agriculture association, representing nearly 7,000 families actively engaged in farming and ranching. Oregon growers are engaged in the production of over 225 agricultural products, and in many instances, are dependent on pesticide products regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”). OFB opposes HB 2619-A, which would prohibit the use of pesticides containing the active ingredient chlorpyrifos.

Oregon is an incredibly diverse state, and chlorpyrifos products play an important role in managing pests on nearly 100 Oregon crops—Christmas trees, sugar beets, grass seed, peppermint, and cranberries, among others. Chlorpyrifos is one of the essential tools that Oregon farmers have kept in their toolbox as an effective way to control pests. It’s a tool that is used only in specific situations to address problematic pests.

HB 2619-A impacts IPM strategies on the farm

Chlorpyrifos is one component of comprehensive IPM programs and helps to maximize yield and contribute to insect resistance management. It often is used in rotation with other products and not on a regular basis. Agriculture is dynamic. A farmer may not use a product much or at all for a year or two and then insect population pressures change, and the farmer must look to that product to save their crops. HB 2619-A would eliminate a critical product in cases where few alternatives currently exist. In many instances those alternatives would be less effective and have greater impacts on non-target species (e.g. pollinators and beneficial insects). For crops with few alternatives, the economic impacts would be substantial.

Additionally, chlorpyrifos is used to manage pests on several crops that no other insecticides can control, including Christmas trees and clover grown for seed. Pests can have devastating effects on yield, and HB 2619-A presents a serious concern for economic damage if the pest is left uncontrolled. While research is ongoing to understand pests and find other means of control, chlorpyrifos is still a much-needed tool in a small toolbox.

Chlorpyrifos is also a long-standing treatment for seeds and minor crops. As a seed treatment, it is used by seed producers and vegetable farmers and is necessary in situations where there is significant pest pressure. As no-till agriculture has become more prevalent, insect pressures have also increased. There are only a few products registered for use as seed treatment insecticides. Farmers base their seed treatment

decisions on historical pest pressures as part of their IPM programs. Without chlorpyrifos, entire fields could be lost or resistance to other pesticides could develop. This would cause significant economic hardship for many Oregon farmers.

HB 2619-A would impact international trade

A unilateral ban on the active ingredient chlorpyrifos would disrupt international trading and financially harm Oregon farmers. Approximately 80 percent of commodities grown in Oregon leave the state, and of those, half are exported to international markets. Other countries and states have strong phytosanitary requirements. Commodities that are exported to international markets can face rejection when a quarantine pest is found.

Chlorpyrifos is currently registered in about 100 countries for use on more than 50 crops. Oregon producers may face trade restrictions in those markets if they lose access to the tool. HB 2619-A would impact Oregon farmers' ability to produce and export agricultural commodities.

HB 2618-A is not supported by science

The EPA evaluates and registers pesticides to ensure that they will not harm people, non-target species, or the environment. After years of testing and scientific studies, EPA determines if a pesticide can be sold and used. An across-the-board ban in Oregon is not supported by EPA's findings and would unnecessarily prohibit the use of critical tools for Oregon agriculture. Farmers have been using chlorpyrifos safely for over 40 years. A state-specific ban will let insects develop resistance to other chemicals more quickly and deprive farmers of a weapon in responding to new pest pressures. For some, there are no alternatives available.

In 2016 EPA's Science Advisory Panel rejected the agency's methodology in quantifying the risk posed by chlorpyrifos. And in 2017, the EPA declined to support a ban on the product, instead stating that it needed more time to come to a clearer scientific resolution on the matter. OFB urges the legislature to allow EPA, the agency responsible for the evaluation of chlorpyrifos, to continue its ongoing science-based and expert-led evaluation of the product, before taking unnecessary action that will impact Oregon's agricultural industry.

OFB has extensive policy regarding the safe and proper use of agriculture and forestry chemicals to ensure a reliable and high-quality supply of agricultural commodities. Our members oppose HB 2619-A, which puts the legislature in the role of making decisions for farmers on a product-by-product basis without the scientific background or on-the-ground knowledge to inform these decisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. We respectfully ask you to oppose HB 2619-A.

Please direct any questions to Jenny Dresler on behalf of the Oregon Farm Bureau (jenny@pacounsel.org).