



Oregon Pediatric Society

A Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Incorporated in Oregon

February 10, 2020

TO: The Honorable Representative Andrea Salinas, Chair
Members of the Oregon House Committee on Health Care

FROM: Jimmy Unger, MD, MPH, Oregon Pediatric Society

SUBJECT: House Bill 4109

The Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS), the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), supports HB 4109 which phases out by 2022 dangerous pesticides containing chlorpyrifos in Oregon. We are extremely concerned about the invasiveness and toxic effects of this chemical, especially to those living near farming areas or with family members who are farm workers.

I am Jimmy Unger, MD MPH, Advocacy Committee co-chair of the Oregon Pediatric Society. In addition to other written testimony from OPS members, I strongly support HB 4109. It is imperative that Oregon ban chlorpyrifos for reasons that, hopefully, this testimony makes clear.

For nearly 20 years, scientists studying the health effects of pesticides have known that chlorpyrifos (the most widely used organophosphate pesticide) damages the developing brain. It harms fetuses via prenatal exposure and young children via exposure in their environment. In 2016, the EPA, based on this compelling evidence of chlorpyrifos' neurotoxicity, planned to outlaw all commercial uses of chlorpyrifos. In March 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency scrapped the plan, overriding the recommendations of scientists and siding with chemical companies. Siding with pesticide industry pressure, they ignored the following frightening deleterious effects of chlorpyrifos:

- a) Prenatal exposure results in significant cognitive deficits in children studies as late as 11 years later
- b) Children exhibit structural brain anomalies as long as 11 years after prenatal and early child exposure. In other words, their MRI reveals their brains to have altered structure.
- c) In the US, the cumulated cost of pesticide exposure (of which chlorpyrifos is the most widely used) is an estimated 16.9 million IQ units in children age 0-5 years
- d) In a controlled study, children exposed to chlorpyrifos run risks of autism and ADHD that are 5-6 times greater than children not so exposed

The Environmental Work Group of the American Academy of Pediatrics has concluded, "The EPA has no basis to allow continued use of chlorpyrifos, and its insistence in so doing puts all children at risk".

HB 4109 bans a potent widely used toxin, thereby protecting the developing brains of future generations from outcomes like developmental delay and autism. Legislators, backed by all the available science, can choose to protect our children. As a pediatrician, I sincerely hope you do.