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Testimony to the House Committee on Health Care Support HB 4109

Chair Salinas, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of HB 4109 to phase out the toxic pesticide chlorpyrifos, which is harmful to human health and the environment.

Friends of Family Farmers represents Oregon family farmers who responsibly steward their land and feed our communities. We promote policies that protect and expand the ability of family scale farmers and ranchers to operate successful land-based enterprises while providing safe and nutritious food for all Oregonians.

We believe responsible stewardship of the land and protection of farmworkers and our communities requires moving towards far less toxic alternatives than chlorpyrifos. This dangerous, WWII era warfare chemical has been linked to low birth weight, reduced IQ and attention disorders in children, as well as other health problems for those exposed to it. It was just about to be restricted by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) until a recent abrupt and scientifically baseless reversal by the Trump administration.

HB 4109 would ban aerial spraying of chlorpyrifos as well as applying the pesticide within 300 feet of schools, and ban all uses beginning in 2022. If passed, Oregon would be the fourth state to restrict this highly toxic pesticide in the face of federal inaction. Recently, even the primary manufacturer of chlorpyrifos announced it is discontinuing its production. While we hope this decision will lead to reduced use of this harmful chemical over time, it is likely that generic versions will continue to be used. Oregon needs to take action now to begin the phase-out process and help farmers find safer alternatives.

Again, thank you for holding this hearing and considering this important legislation. We urge you to send it to the House floor with a 'do pass' recommendation.

Thank you,

Shari Sirkin

Shari Sirkin
Executive Director
Friends of Family Farmers