



## Testimony in Support of HB 4109

Catie Theisen

Oregon Nurses Association

February 11, 2020

Chair Salinas and Members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of HB 4109 to protect the health of Oregon patients, farmworkers and rural communities by phasing out chlorpyrifos in our state. The Oregon Nurses Association is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association and is proud to represent over 15,000 registered nurses who work in almost every health care setting -- from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers and in community-based public health. As such, ONA members are deeply committed to passing evidence-based policies that help Oregonians live healthier lives.

Local ONA members have increasingly been active on the use of aerial pesticides over the last several years, with a group of nurses in Lincoln County successfully passing a local ballot measure to ban the use of all aerial pesticide spraying. In particular, Chlorpyrifos has long been recognized as posing a serious danger to human health, and particularly to children's neurological development, even at low dosages. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took action by banning household use of Chlorpyrifos in 2001. Public health data has further found that children of mothers exposed to chlorpyrifos were more likely to develop neurodevelopmental disorders.<sup>1</sup> Studies on pregnant women exposed to chlorpyrifos through home use demonstrated a link between in utero exposure and low birth weights, reduced head circumference of newborns, and pervasive developmental disorders<sup>2</sup> delays in learning and mental development, attention problems.

HB 4109 proposes a sensible phase out on the use of chlorpyrifos that protects our children, agricultural workers and rural communities. HB 4109 would first prohibit aerial spraying of products that contain *only* chlorpyrifos, prohibits chlorpyrifos use within 300 feet of schools and adds stronger protections for farmworkers. By January 1, 2022, the phase out comes into full effect by prohibiting sale, purchase or use of pesticide products containing chlorpyrifos. This 18 month phase out allows farmers and to adopt safer alternative pesticide practices that will improve farmworker and community health while helping farms maintain healthy soils.

Ultimately, the use of Chlorpyrifos puts everyone at risk – including farmworkers, consumers and those who live in the spray area, which is why the Oregon Nurses Association urges your support of HB 4109.

---

<sup>1</sup> See, Virginia Rauh et al., Impact of Prenatal Chlorpyrifos Exposure on Neurodevelopment in the First 3 Years of Life, 118 Pediatrics 1845 (2006).

<sup>2</sup> Whyatt RM, V Rauh, DB Barr, et al., Prenatal Insecticide Exposures and Birth Weight and Length among an Urban Minority Cohort, Env. Health Perspect. 2004, 112(10):1125-32.