

Date: February 21, 2020

Subject: Support for H.B. 4109 The Healthy Kids and Farmworkers Act

Senator Dembrow, Vice-chair Baertschiger and Members of the Committee

My name is Antonio and I am an agricultural worker. I came to Oregon over 15 years ago and I have been working in the field ever since. I have worked in the strawberry, grape, and raspberry harvest as well as many other jobs that have been exposed to chlorpyrifos. Working in agriculture is difficult, but it is an honest way to financially support my family.

Working in the fields exposes us to pesticides that affect our health. We never really know the type of chemicals that are sprayed on the crops. I have smelled pesticides that have a strong acidic odor-- almost as if it were rotten food . I have witnessed how those chemicals are sprayed on plants and how they kill unwanted weeds. On various occasions I have been tasked to spray hazardous pesticides without proper training on how to handle them and without information about the type of chemical and it's harmful effects.

All of this worries me because I do not know which types of pesticides I have been exposed to and I worry about bringing toxic residue into my home to my family members. As I learn more about chlorpyrifos and the crops it's used on, such as strawberries, I am concerned that I have been ingesting this neurotoxic pesticide when eating and handling this crop. I worry about the health of my daughters and that of my own. If any of us were to become ill from pesticide poisoning, we would be placed in a difficult position because none of us are medically insured. It would be extremely difficult to cover medical costs. As well as not knowing what pesticides we have come in contact with can make it difficult to treat.

In respect to the health of my family, I urge you all to phase out the use of Chlorpyrifos in our state by supporting HB 4109. We need laws that protect agricultural workers. We perform very important work and we deserve to have better working conditions. We deserve to know what chemicals we are working with, and feel safe in our work. I urge your support in House Bill 4109 because it is affecting our families.

Sincerely,

Antonio Amaya  
Woodburn, Oregon