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8347 SE Orient Drive

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Testimony to The Oregon State Senate

Support for HB 4109

Distinguished State Senators,

Thank-you for providing this opportunity to share my candid testimony concerning the repeated exposure to the extremely harmful toxic nerve agent chlorpyrifos. I find it very hard and disturbing to sit down as a citizen of Oregon to write about my experience and current dilemma. I live in East Multnomah County on 2.04 acres, across the street from Ekstrom Nursery farms acreage that supports ornamental plantings. I have lived on my property for 31 yrs. with my partner. Ekstrom started farming across our property about 15 yrs. ago. We raise Nubian goats and have had many dogs over the years. I am an avid organic gardener who takes pride in not using herbicides and insecticides on our property. I proudly display two signs on the property that I received from the Master Gardener Program that read "Pesticide Free Zone". I now realize that since Ekstrom Nursery started farming nursery stock across the street from our property, I have been living a lie regarding our property being a pesticide-free zone.

In March of 2016 at approximately 7:30 am. I was potting plants in the front of my house. As I walked back and forth from the barn to the front of the house getting planting materials, I smelled a slight odor in the air. Shortly thereafter my eyes and nostrils started to burn. I then became dizzy and nauseated. I also started to wheeze when I would take in a breath. My chest felt like something was pressing on it.

I looked across the street from our property and Ekstrom Nursery was spraying their nursery stock in the field. I became so ill that I had to be taken to the Gresham Urgent Care for treatment. The doctor asked what I was exposed to and I said "some type of chemical spray from the nursery across the street from my house". I had no idea what chemicals were in the spray they were using. I was unaware of the magnitude of spray drifting onto our property. The doctor said "it is hard to treat you if we do not know what chemicals are in the spray". The physician gave me medication for the nausea, a prescription to treat the ongoing nausea and he instructed me to get to a bottle of charcoal capsules and take as directed. I missed the next day of work recovering from the chemical reaction that I had from the spraying. I called the Oregon Department of Agriculture and filed a complaint against the Ekstrom Nursery. The Pesticides Program of the OR Dept. of Agriculture conducted an investigation. The investigators came to our property and swabbed various locations on our property, for example the mailbox, the irrigation box in the front yard and the R.V. parked next to the front of the house.

The results of the swabs detected measurable levels of chlorpyrifos. To summarize the Pesticide Program of the OR Dept. of Agriculture assigned an ODA Case Number 150481 to the complaint against Ekstrom Nursery. The nursery was given a Violation and Civil Penalty. The nursery paid a fine and agreed to make a courtesy call me to notify me 24 hrs. in advance of spraying chlorpyrifos in the nursery field

across from my house. To avoid exposure to the drift of chlorpyrifos I was instructed by Roger the Ekstrom Spray Applicator to stay in the house or leave my property for the day.

Since May of 2016, I have received these courtesy calls from Ekstrom Nursery 3-4 times per year, spring through fall, to notify me of the spraying of the toxic nerve agent insecticide chlorpyrifos. It is now 2020 and in March, the courtesy calls will again begin. The OSHA Safety Data Sheet on Chlorpyrifos 4E states: "Do not breathe dust/fumes/gas/mist/vapors/spray". The OSHA Safety Data Sheet also states that chlorpyrifos absorbs strongly to soil particles from 60 days to 1 year. It is very scary to think of the accumulation of chlorpyrifos in our soil from 3-4 applications from the nursery annually. Do the math. Our property is exposed 3-4 times annually. When I mow the grass in the front lawn and goat pasture with the riding mower during the dry summer months and early fall the mower blades disrupt the soil creating dust particles in the air. Chlorpyrifos in my yard is attached to the soil particles stirred up as dust that I have been unknowingly breathing in. The dogs, the goats and my partner have been exposed to breathing disrupted soil particles containing chlorpyrifos as well.

In 2012 one of my 2yr.old female Nubian goats developed a very rare malignant nasal cavity tumor according to the OSU Vet School in Corvallis. They removed the large nasal tumor and it aggressively grew back twice as large within a month. The goat had to be put down. Last July one of our male Nubian goats had to be hospitalized at the OSU Vet School for 2.5 weeks for unexplained neurological symptoms that almost took the life of the goat. It cost us \$2600.00 to treat our goat for the life-threatening neurological symptoms. One of our yellow labs died from hemangiosarcoma. Another dog developed chondrosarcoma on her rib and had to have five surrounding ribs removed to save her life. My partner was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2010 and is currently in remission. I was diagnosed with a small growth on my pituitary gland in Sept. 2019. I have to have another MRI of the tumor in late March 2020 to monitor it for growth in size. How does one know if the long term aerial drift exposure to chlorpyrifos and breathing in dust containing chlorpyrifos from the soil is the cause of all of these serious life-threatening illnesses?

I hope, Senators, you can appreciate how hard and disturbing it is to write this testimony. Chlorpyrifos is in the same family as Sarin nerve gas that was developed for military chemical warfare. Nerve agents were banned by the Geneva Conventions that establishes standards of international law for humanitarian treatment in war. When I found out from the Department of Agriculture that the air and soil on our property is regularly exposed to and contaminated by chlorpyrifos, a toxic nerve agent I was and still am horrified.

What am I to do as a citizen of Oregon? Isn't it the job of Oregon Legislators to protect Oregon citizens from harm? Facts are facts, not beliefs. Chlorpyrifos should be banned just as Sarin nerve gas is banned. No living being should be exposed to chlorpyrifos an extremely dangerous carcinogenic and neurotoxic agent. I urge you to pass HB 4109 to phase out chlorpyrifos and immediately end the aerial sprays that have causes such harm to me, my family and my property.

Sincerely,

Karen A. Black