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2/21/2019

Re: HB 4109 - Support

Dear Senator Dembrow, Vice-Chair Baertschiger, and Members of the Committee:

Verde serves communities by building environmental wealth through social enterprise, outreach and advocacy. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide supportive testimony for HB 4109, which would protect the health of Oregon, farmworkers and rural communities by phasing out chlorpyrifos in our state.

Verde advocates for communities that are adversely and disproportionately harmed by environmental and health hazards, and we feel that chlorpyrifos is a neurotoxin that represents a significant risk to everyone, but especially communities who are most vulnerable to its use, including farmworkers, rural communities, children, and pregnant people. It, at its bottom line, represents a public health issue.

Chlorpyrifos impacts farmworkers and rural communities directly through its use, but also has indirect impacts through residue on common foods, contamination of water sources, and drift. Long term exposure to Chlorpyrifos can have devastating neurological and physical effects.

HB 4109 proposes a sensible phase-out of chlorpyrifos to better protect the workers at the frontlines of its use and the families and children who are affected through their food and water. It is a ban on aerial spraying of products that contain only chlorpyrifos, prohibits the use within 300 feet of schools, and adds stronger protections for farmworkers by instituting an eight-day reentry period for fields that have been sprayed with chlorpyrifos.

Chlorpyrifos is an old chemistry and its use nationally has already declined to the point that its manufacturer will no longer produce it. There are good alternatives, some of which also qualify for organic agricultural pest control. Organic growers in Oregon already bring in more than \$350 million annually without the use of organophosphates and other synthetic pesticides, proving that it is possible to farm and thrive in Oregon without the use of chlorpyrifos. Farming practices and protecting the lives of our workers should not be at odds. Safer farming practices can be instituted that also improve the working & living conditions of everyone, and HB 4109 does just that. We urge your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Orlando" or similar.

Climate and Energy Policy Coordinator
Verde