



Support Toxics Free Schools

02/21/2023

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Nick Keough, and I am the Legislative Director of the Oregon Student Association. **I'm writing today to ask for your support on SB 426.**

Oregon Student Association advocates for the collective interests of students in postsecondary institutions in Oregon. This includes the physical and emotional well-being of students. Despite our focus on postsecondary institutions, we recognize the importance of advocating for our students at every step in their educational journey – including during their time in Oregon's public school system.

Even in small amounts, pesticide exposures put children at higher risk of adverse health effects. Children in historically disadvantaged communities of color, or those with parents who work with chemicals for their job, already bear the burden of increased exposure to harmful chemicals. Pesticides are associated with asthma and respiratory illnesses, learning disabilities and can lead to chronic illnesses. **Schools should be a toxic-free place that is safe for children to learn and play.**

The Healthy and Safe Schools Act, passed in 2017, requires school districts to report the presence of lead, asbestos, and radon - and pesticide use - to the Department of Education on a regular basis. Schools have been doing a good job of testing and reporting lead, asbestos, and radon, but not pesticides. Oregon's School Districts have never received adequate resources to implement the requirements of the Oregon School Integrated Pest Management law and the Healthy and Safe Schools Act. **Schools need help and support to meet these requirements in order to protect students' health, and deal with pesticides safely and legally.**

School districts need a simple and easy electronic record keeping system to ensure they have 4 years of complete pesticide application records, as required by law. We must stop the unfair practice of charging parents thousands of dollars merely to get a paper copy of pesticide application records for their child's school district. SB 426 will use modern technology to create and store pesticide application records and make it easy, and more equitable, to properly notify parents, students, and teachers of pesticide applications, as is required by law. The 2009 School IPM law failed to include Oregon Department of Education or children's health experts. SB 426 will ensure that the agencies responsible for children's education and children's health are stakeholders in the decision-making process for using pesticides on school grounds. **For these reasons, the Oregon Student Association urges you to support SB 426.**

Thank you,

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