



## **Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the committee—

On behalf of the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC), a bi-partisan, environmental nonprofit that works at the nexus of human health and the environment, I would like to express my support for SB 426- the toxic free schools act.

Similar to the environmental health work that OEC does with toxics, and chemicals in kid's products, SB 426 recognizes that children are simply more vulnerable to pesticide exposure and other chemicals, due to their small size and still-developing bodies.

Even in small amounts, pesticide exposures (even common pesticides) 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. Schools should be a toxic-free place that is safe for children to learn and play! Pesticides are associated with:

- Asthma
- Learning disabilities
- Chronic illness

OEC has always supported transparency and equal access to information on the use of hazardous chemicals- and it goes the same with pesticides. SB 426 would stop the unfair practices of charging parents for public records act requests when they want to know what is being sprayed on their school playgrounds. And it would help school districts get technical help for pesticides alternatives- an investment that should be made.



OEC notes that SB 426 remedies an omission in the original School IPM statute that left educators and the Department of Education out of program development and Implementation. SB 426 corrects this omission by supporting ODE to convene a diverse stakeholder group that will be able to identify and discuss relevant issues related to pests, pesticide alternatives and children's health protections, as equity necessitates.

Respectfully submitted,

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