

From the desk of Rep. Zach Hudson



The following organizations Urge Your Support for HB 2684 Toxic Free Schools

HB 2684 Toxic Free Schools updates laws for school Integrated Pest Management plans. It requires that a school integrated pest management plan and low-impact pesticide list be reviewed at least once every five years and made available to the public on a website. It provides that a low-impact pesticide list shall be included in an integrated pest management plan, and adds school gardens to the definition of school campuses.

Background: Beyond Toxics worked with then State Senator Suzanne Bonamici to pass the School IPM Law in 2009. After egregious pesticide poisonings were found to be taking place at schools, this law was created to protect children from pesticide exposures in schools. When the law took effect, Oregon's school IPM law was the strongest in the nation; however, it is now in need of modernization to streamline processes and improve accessibility of information.

The link between childhood asthma and chronic school absenteeism is well documented (*Johnson SB, et. al. Asthma and Attendance in Urban Schools. Prev Chronic Dis 2019;16:190074. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd16.190074>*). Studies have shown a significant association between the prevalence of childhood asthma and the presence of pests, allergens, and traditional pesticides. Furthermore, IPM has been found to decrease exposure to both pests and traditional pesticides while decreasing the levels of allergens found in buildings (*Kass D, et. al. Effectiveness of an integrated pest management intervention in controlling cockroaches, mice, and allergens in New York City public housing. Environ Health Perspect. 2009 Aug;117(8):1219-25. doi: 10.1289/ehp.0800149. Epub 2009 Apr 15. PMID: 19672400; PMCID: PMC2721864*).

Oregon's children deserve to go to school in an environment that is safe, toxic free, and that does not exacerbate existing health conditions. HB 2684 is designed to protect students from pesticide exposure while they are at school, and has the potential to reduce asthma and allergy exacerbations caused by traditional pesticides and/or uncontrolled pests.

The Toxic Free Schools bill, HB 2684, is a common sense piece of legislation that will support school districts in adopting a "prevention-first" method of pest control practices to prevent children's exposures to pesticides on athletic fields, playgrounds, cafeterias and learning spaces including school gardens. We thank you for your time and commitment to improving the lives of young Oregonians. **We urge you to support Toxic Free Schools and vote yes on HB 2684.**

