



Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
Chair Senator Michael Dembrow  
Vice Chair Senator Alan Olsen  
Committee Members

Monday, March 25, 2019

Support for S.B. 853 pertaining to the sale and use of Chlorpyrifos and Neonicotinoids

Cascadia Wildlands is a regional non-profit conservation organization based in Eugene, Oregon, representing nearly 10,000 members and supporters across the country. Cascadia Wildlands works to protect and restore the wildlands and species in the Cascadia bioregion. Our members live and play in the forests and watersheds of our bioregion and are dependent on them for clean water, fish and wildlife habitat, stable property values, and recreation. We have been longtime supporters of commonsense, science-backed restrictions on the use of persistent environmental toxins that poison water, kill pollinators, undermine biodiversity, and threaten human lives. **Cascadia Wildlands supports S.B. 853 pertaining to the sale and use of Chlorpyrifos and Neonicotinoids, two commonly used pesticides that have been linked to a wide range of alarming environmental and human health concerns.**

A growing body of scientific research has highlighted the threats that the persistent use of neonicotinoids have for biodiversity, water quality, pollinators, and fish species. Neonicotinoids, or neonics, are a widely used pesticide that have been linked to sharp declines in insect and aquatic invertebrate populations and a prolific contaminant of streams and rivers<sup>1</sup>. Pollinators and other insect populations are the very basis of the terrestrial food chain, and their health affects the stability of bird and mammal populations all the way up. Similarly, invertebrates such as crustaceans and mollusk are the foundation of the aquatic food web and are crucial to the survival of fish and wildlife populations. Because insects and aquatic invertebrates are suffering from exposure to neonics, a host of non-target organisms are also exposed all the way up the food chain.

In April of 2018, the European Union legally recognized the dangers of neonicotinoids and banned their sale and use. While S.B. 853 would not ban the use of neonics, it would take the important and commonsense step of requiring certification and training before the purchase, sale or dissemination of this highly toxic class of pesticides.

While federal regulation of the brain-harming pesticide chlorpyrifos seems more and more unlikely, now more than ever we need action from the state to ban the use of this particularly alarming poison. Chlorpyrifos is a widely used insecticide linked to infertility, diabetes,

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<sup>1</sup> The Xerces Society. "Scientists Urge Action to Protect Waters from Neonicotinoid Insecticides". 3/13/18.

respiratory disease, developmental disorders and more. Chlorpyrifos is a nerve agent made to kill insects by binding to enzymes that control the messages passed between nerve cells, effectively breaking down neural communication. When exposed to humans, chlorpyrifos functions the same way, and consistent with exposure to other toxic substances, the most susceptible to adverse health effects are children. Studies following children whose mothers were exposed to chlorpyrifos during pregnancy found that effects on children included memory loss, lower birth weight and lower IQs<sup>2</sup>. Despite this, chlorpyrifos are still commonly used in the logging industry and in agriculture and are applied to more than 50 fruit, nut, cereal and vegetable crops. In a 2018 federal ruling for the EPA to ban chlorpyrifos, the Supreme Court stated that there was “no justification for the E.P.A.’s decision in its 2017 order to maintain a tolerance for chlorpyrifos in the face of scientific evidence that its residue on food causes neurodevelopmental damage to children.”

When it comes to neonicotinoids and chlorpyrifos, the United States is lagging behind in standards that protect both the environment and human health. It is long past time to bring our policies concerning these widely recognized poisons up to the standards of science and commonsense. Cascadia Wildlands encourages you to support S.B. 853 to ban the use of the poison chlorpyrifos and add neonicotinoids to the list of over 500 restricted use pesticides in the state of Oregon.

Thank you for your time, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any thoughts or questions.

Sincerely,

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Cascadia Wildlands  
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<sup>2</sup> Lipton, Eric. *New York Times*. “Court Orders E.P.A. to Ban Chlorpyrifos, Pesticide Tied to Children’s Health Problems”. 8/9/18.

