

March 26, 2019

RE: Support for Oregon SB 853 and HB 3058 - Ban on Chlorpyrifos and Restrictions on Neonicotinoids

Dear Chairs Clem and Dembrow, and Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, and House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use:

Thank you for hearing our comments today.

My name is Kathleen Sullivan, I'm a Clatsop County Commissioner. Our County Board has submitted a letter of support for Oregon Senate Bill 853 and House Bill 3058. These bills ban the use of Chlorpyrifos and restricts Neonicotinoids.

Since our letter has already been submitted for consideration, I would like to use my brief time to share more personal insights.

Now in my third year as a county commissioner, I take seriously my role in making decisions to safeguard public health and our county's economy. I appreciate the important work all of you do for the people of Oregon and I imagine the pressure on you is enormous.

I know your constituents like mine, want a clean and safe environment for their children to grow up healthy and strong. I am thinking of how important salmon is to the families in my county that depend on commercial or recreational fishing. I am thinking of some young farmers in my county, proud to have their farms, raising young children, and working hard to produce local food for our local economy, the public markets, the restaurants, the community supported cooperative grocery.

I know that 1 out of 3 fruits and vegetables require pollinators.

I grew up in a small farming community, my grandfather kept bees. I remember taking a delicate hunk of dripping honeycomb and smashing onto a warm slice of buttered toast. I remember picking a ripe peach from a tree, biting in to it, still warm from the summer sun.

The world has changed so much since my childhood. Who would have imagined we would need to worry about too few insects, would have to worry about losing our pollinators?

In the course of one afternoon, in random conversations with folks in my community, I heard of two separate families who experienced the complete collapse of their bee hives last year in Clatsop County. I asked that both of them submit their stories to these committees. I know you have heard from many people throughout Oregon on these two bills.

I am not a scientist, but I am grateful for science. I recognize the difference it makes in all of our lives. I trust the scientific evidence that says we need to ban Chlorpyrifos and restrict Neonicotinoids. I trust the exhaustive worldwide research that tells us our pollinators are in trouble, I understand how this puts our food supply in danger. I know this committee, and this legislature has the power to help, by passing laws to ban or restrict these pesticides.

You know, when I was 13 years old, in 7th grade, my teacher told our class that the American Bald Eagle was on the brink of extinction because of the use of the pesticide DDT. I remember wishing with all my heart that someday, I would be lucky enough see one in the wild before they all disappeared.

Today, because DDT was banned in the United States, I can look out onto the Columbia River and see bald eagles soaring in the air. They have returned from the brink. I still feel lucky to be a witness to their lives.

What you do as policy makers has meaning. We all experience the consequences of decisions made in our lives. As policy makers, you have an opportunity to influence all of us. Your decisions are important. Help the bees. Help our children. Help Oregon lead the nation. Vote to pass Senate Bill 853 and House Bill 3058. Thank you for listening today.