



**TESTIMONY**  
**April 2, 2019**

**Senate Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources**  
**Chair Michael Dembrow**

**RE: Opposition of SB 926** -- *Relating to the aerial application of pesticides to state land. Prohibits aerial application of pesticides on certain lands owned by state.*

**Submitted by: Katie Fast, Oregonians for Food & Shelter**  
**Jenny Dresler, Oregon Farm Bureau**

Oregonians for Food & Shelter and Oregon Farm Bureau oppose Senate Bill 926 which would prohibit aerial application of pesticides on forestland owned by the state or a state government entity.

Management of Oregon state forestlands is important to maximize the value and utility of these lands for the benefit of all Oregonians. Forest management is a complex process of continually adjusting to changing conditions, uses and pressures. Forest management tools, such as prescribed burning, grazing, timber harvesting and replanting, forest fire prevention and suppression, are all tools designed for developing healthy forests for commercial and/or recreational uses and watershed enhancement. Successful vegetation management ensures that our state forests are conserved, restored, and made more resilient while protecting and enhancing our water resources. Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) is a component of the forest management program that utilizes silvicultural practices overseeing tree genetics, growing of seedlings in nurseries, reforestation, and restoration of our forestlands. Reforestation is a core practice to protect watersheds and forest viability especially when affected by natural events, such as wildfire, climate change, and insect, disease and weed infestations. IVM utilizes numerous methods of managing vegetation, including applying specific herbicides by air, to minimize forest fires, allow seedling growth, control noxious and invasive weeds, encourage forestland grasses for wildlife, and more.

To allow young seedlings to grow and outpace invasive vegetation that depletes available nutrients and water, aerial herbicide applications are an effective and necessary management tool. Very few herbicide applications are needed within the first years of planting to control vegetation to allow the young trees to get to a size where they can compete on their own.

Additionally, aerial application can be used with other methods to control unwanted vegetation and to suppress invasive species that threaten forestlands. Aerial applications remain a vitally important tool to respond to outbreaks of serious forest pests, like invasive gypsy moths that could devastate Oregon's forests, if not controlled. These pest management efforts contribute directly to improving forest and grassland health which, in turn, benefit wildlife and water

resources. Eliminating the availability of utilizing aerial applications in this very limited toolbox of forest management options, is unjustified and irresponsible.

Aerial application is often the safest, fastest, most efficient and cost-effective way to apply herbicides, especially on remote, steep and rough or inaccessible forest terrain.

Aerial application requires one pilot in a protected cockpit to apply herbicides. The alternative, ground-based applications, uses a team of many workers--- walking through steep and often unsafe terrain carrying backpacks full of materials, possibly in hot, or cold, wet and muddy, conditions either which can be extremely exhausting and dangerous for workers. Worker safety is of utmost importance and utilizing ground spray crews in these conditions is not safe, efficient, or necessary.

Oregon Forest Practices Act (FPA) and pesticide product labels require very specific restrictions and protections for Oregon waterways. The FPA states in OAR 629-620-0400: Protection of the Waters of the State and Other Resources When Applying Chemicals, the following buffers are required:

Fish and domestic Streams- receive a 60ft buffer, unless applying fertilizer.

Non-fish streams with surface water present- No spray in open water- Follow chemical label for specific setbacks

Non-fish streams with no water present- no buffer

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency dictates very clear application restrictions for pesticides, especially when applied by air. Factors such as temperature inversions, boom length, flight height above treatment site, wind speed, droplet size, drift reduction additives, and additional buffers (beyond the FPA requirement) for protection of waters, if necessary, are addressed on the product label. The label language is enforceable by federal (EPA) and state (Oregon Department of Agriculture) agencies. This process works and is protective of Oregon waters.

**We ask that you OPPOSE SB 926** and keep this important forest management tool available for the safety of forest workers and for the benefit of Oregonians that rely on Oregon's forest industries.

Thank you for your consideration, and please contact us if you have any questions.