

Testimony opposed to HB 4109
Greg Loberg
2020 special legislative session

I am the manager of West Coast Beet Seed Company. We are located in Salem and produce sugarbeet seed in the Willamette Valley. I have served on the Boards of several seed associations and on the Governor's 2014 Genetically Engineered (GE) Task Force. We are one of only two local companies that produce essentially all of the sugarbeet seed for the US market.

Sugarbeet grown for seed requires about one year to reproduce. We plant in August and harvest the following August. So, we have a long period of exposure to environmental risks.

We value chlorpyrifos insecticide for its broad spectrum efficacy against many insect pests. In particular, however, it is effectively the only product that can be used after planting or transplanting to combat a soil pest called symphylan. These pests can feed heavily on the taproot of a sugarbeet and either kill the plant or make it completely unproductive. In a specialty seed, such as sugarbeet, development of alternative insecticides is very limited due to the relatively small market size.

I would like the use of chlorpyrifos in Oregon to continue. I believe that chlorpyrifos can be used safely and is best regulated first by the US Environmental Protection Agency and under that by the Oregon Department of Agriculture. I don't believe the legislature is the correct place to regulate, restrict, or ban this pesticide or any other. I urge your opposition to HB 4109.