



Oppose HB 4109: The Wrong Approach for Oregon

The insecticide Chlorpyrifos is a critical tool for farmers growing more than 50 different crops in nearly 100 countries. Oregon farmers rely on chlorpyrifos because of its efficacy and compatibility in Integrated Pest Management and resistance programs.

Many Oregon farmers have few alternatives for managing pests and exporting products. Nearly all of Oregon's 225+ crops are considered "specialty" crops, meaning they are not major commodities in the United States. In order to cover development costs, most pesticide product development focuses on major commodities such as corn, soybeans or cotton, leaving specialty crops with few or no new pesticide alternatives. For many Oregon crops, Chlorpyrifos is the only product available to control pests. Further, chlorpyrifos is the only treatment available or, in some cases, even required, for products to be accepted in domestic and global markets.

Rulemaking to Reduce Bystander Exposure

The Oregon legislature debated this issue in 2019 when it considered HB 2619 and HB 3058. These bills would have eliminated an important crop protection product for the specialty crops that Oregon is known for.

After both bills failed to pass, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) proactively decided to address concerns and identify risk mitigation strategies to reduce the risk of bystander exposure to chlorpyrifos. The rules advisory committee (RAC) is comprised of farmworker advocates, grower representatives, environmental advocates, and toxicologists. This process is a better alternative that will help maintain grower access to a much-needed crop protection tool while ensuring that Oregon takes action to protect farmworkers and other bystanders from the risk of exposure to chlorpyrifos.

The RAC was appointed in November 2019 and has met twice to discuss existing regulations and worker protections as well as any gaps that can be addressed to reduce bystander exposure risk. It will convene again in March to respond to draft rules that will include new restrictions on the use of chlorpyrifos in Oregon.

HB 4109 is the Wrong Approach for Oregon

In contrast to the thoughtful approach underway at the ODA, HB 4109 eliminates all uses of chlorpyrifos without any evidentiary basis to support that decision and without any funding dedicated to find alternatives. HB 4109 fails to recognize the considerable investment and time required to find effective alternatives to chlorpyrifos. Growers will be saddled with a substantial cost burden when many lack legal alternatives to control pest pressures. At best, farmers may try to find legal alternatives, though these will also have human health trade-offs. At worst, Oregon farmers are left with no products to protect their crops and will suffer financial loss.

HB 4109 jeopardizes domestic and international markets. In some instances the presence of a pest will prohibit a product from entering the market or require a crop to be destroyed at port. Christmas trees, specialty seeds, hazelnut orchards, tree fruit, grass seed, berries, processed vegetables, mint, and cranberries are among the crops that have few, if any, alternatives to combat pests. HB 4109 jeopardizes the viability of these crops in Oregon.

The rulemaking at ODA is the right approach for Oregon, one that will protect human health and maintain an important tool for Oregon growers who lack access to alternatives to protect their crops.

Vote 'NO' on HB 4109

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