
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

February 21, 2020

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Baertschiger, and Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

As the state's leading political voice for reproductive health care, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon urges strong support for HB 4109. We stand with our reproductive justice partners who have long proclaimed that the fight for justice and equity does not end with having the right to make reproductive and sexual health decisions; that fight must include advocating for people to have the power and resources necessary to raise and support their families in safe environments and healthy communities. By phasing out chlorpyrifos, a neurotoxin with detrimental impacts on neurological development, HB 4109 is critical to protecting the health of Oregon farmworkers and rural communities.

The use of chlorpyrifos puts the health of our children, pregnant mothers, farmworkers and rural communities at risk. Chlorpyrifos affects the human nervous system in the same manner that it affects pests: serious exposure causes vomiting, abdominal muscle cramps, tremors and weakness, loss of coordination, and, in severe poisoning cases, unconsciousness, convulsions, difficulty in breathing, and paralysis.¹ Farm workers are exposed to chlorpyrifos when it is sprayed on crops, such as Christmas trees, grass seed fields, orchards, and much more.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has documented adverse effects of chlorpyrifos on the physical and mental development of infants and children. Public health data found that the children of mothers who were exposed to chlorpyrifos were more likely to develop neurodevelopmental disorders, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism spectrum disorder.² Studies on pregnant women exposed to chlorpyrifos through home use demonstrated a link between in utero exposure and low birth weights, reduced head circumference of newborns, and pervasive developmental disorders, such as delays in learning and mental development.³ New studies have also linked the chemical to hormone-related cancer in adults, including breast, thyroid, and ovarian cancer.⁴

There are three key measures we can immediately take to protect the health of our communities by reducing exposure to chlorpyrifos. HB 4109 would prohibit aerial spraying of products that contain only chlorpyrifos; protects our children by prohibiting chlorpyrifos use within 300 feet of schools; and institutes an eight day re-entry period on fields that have been sprayed with chlorpyrifos. HB 4109 also proposes a sensible phase out on the use of chlorpyrifos. This is a public health issue that is essential to protecting and improving the lives of our children, agricultural workers, and rural communities. We respectfully urge your support for HB 4109.

Sincerely,

Emily McLain
Executive Director
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

¹ Christensen et al., "Chlorpyrifos General Fact Sheet.

² See, Virginia Rauh et al., Impact of Prenatal Chlorpyrifos Exposure on Neurodevelopment in the First 3 Years of Life, 118 *Pediatrics* 1845 (2006).

³ Whyatt RM, V Rauh, DB Barr, et al., Prenatal Insecticide Exposures and Birth Weight and Length among an Urban Minority Cohort, *Env. Health Perspect.* 2004, 112(10):1125-32.

⁴ Ventura et al., "Effects of the pesticide chlorpyrifos on breast cancer disease. Implication of epigenetic mechanisms." Engel et al., "Insecticide Use and Breast Cancer Risk among Farmers' Wives in the Agricultural Health Study.