



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

TO: Chair Dembrow

Vice-Chair Baertschinger

Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

FR: Alma Raya, Legislative Specialist, Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: Oregon AFL-CIO Support for HB 4109

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across the state and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. Farm workers provide an indispensable service to our communities and are essential to the success of agriculture in Oregon. Despite their important role, farmworkers are disproportionately exposed to unsafe working conditions and harmful pesticides like Chlorpyrifos. HB 4109 adds stronger protections for these workers and protects the health of many Oregonians in rural communities. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony, we urge your support of HB 4109.

The use of Chlorpyrifos in our state puts the health of Oregon farmworkers, pregnant women and children in rural communities at risk. This chemical was originally developed as a warfare nerve gas during WWII and is currently sprayed on Christmas trees, grass seed fields, orchards, berries, hazelnuts and other crops. Farmworkers exposed to Chlorpyrifos can develop hormone-related cancer, including breast, thyroid and ovarian¹. In children, it causes permanent and irreversible brain damage that can result in loss of working memory and attention deficit disorder, even at very low levels of exposure². Our communities are also exposed to this pesticide from residue on common foods and contaminated water sources. HB 4109 would implement safer farming practices to protect current workers and it would phase out on the use of chlorpyrifos by January 2022. Oregonians fundamentally believe in healthy foods and healthy environments for everyone, we urge your support of HB 4109.

¹ 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.

² See, Raugh, V., Arunajadai, S. Horton, M. Perera, F., Hoepner, L., Barr, D.B., & Whyatt, R., Seven-year Neurodevelopmental Scores and Prenatal Exposure to Chlorpyrifos, A Common Agricultural Pesticide, Environmental Health Perspectives, 119(8), 1196 (2011)