



Feb 21, 2023

TO: Senate Committee On Education
FR: Jesse Lawrence-Weilmann, Campaign Associate, Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG)
RE: SB 426 - The Toxic Free Schools Act

OSPIRG is a statewide, citizen-based organization representing thousands of Oregonians.

OSPIRG strongly supports SB 426. This bill takes key steps towards making Oregon's schools a safer and healthier environment for our state's children and education professionals. Oregon's existing laws on this subject are more than a decade out of date and need to be updated.

Protecting our children from hazardous chemicals is critically important. Children's smaller, developing bodies are more vulnerable to toxics than adults. Exposure can have serious, lasting impacts on kids' health and development. Due to this vulnerability, regulations on what chemicals can be used on school grounds must be kept strong and up to date. This bill will ensure that Oregon's regulations remain current and effective. Furthermore, this bill takes the necessary step of providing schools with the resources they will need to effectively enact the new practices this bill will mandate.

At a minimum, there must be transparent record-keeping of pesticide use on school grounds. This is critical information which must be available to all stakeholders for the sake of both student health and the enforcement of critical regulations. This bill will create the needed transparency around pesticide use on school grounds.

SB 426 will put Oregon on a path to safer, more responsible and more transparent pesticide use practices in our schools, and provides schools with the resources which will be required to implement these important policies. For all these reasons, OSPIRG urges you to support SB 426