

Submitter: Kristina Lefever
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB426

Dear Legislators:

My husband and I support SB 426 and think you should too. We want children to be healthy and part of that is making sure that neighborhood schools are toxic-free places and safe for them to learn and play! There are many reasons it is past time to pass this bill!

Children are more vulnerable to pesticide exposure: Even in small amounts, pesticide exposures put children at higher risk of adverse health effects. Children in historically disadvantaged communities of color, or those with parents who work with chemicals for their job, already bear the burden of increased exposure to harmful chemicals. Too many children these days have asthma, learning disabilities, and on-going chronic illness - pesticides are associated with all of these.

Pesticides are like other toxic chemicals used in schools, and need to be treated as such: Under the Healthy and Safe Schools Act, passed in 2017, school districts are required to report the presence of lead, asbestos and radon - and pesticide use - to the Department of Education on a regular basis. Schools have been doing a good job of testing and reporting lead, asbestos and radon, but not pesticides. Why do 86% of school districts have up-to-date Healthy and Safe Schools reports on their websites, compared to only 39% of schools posting up-to-date school IPM plans on their websites (updated within the last 5 years since the Healthy and Safe Schools Act was adopted in 2017).

Please fund the mandate! Oregon's School Districts have never received adequate resources to implement the requirements of the Oregon School Integrated Pest Management law and the Healthy and Safe Schools Act. Schools need help to meet these requirements in order to protect students' health. As recently as 2020, Oregon schools have been found out of compliance and, in some cases, incurred thousands of dollars in civil penalties or letters of violation. Schools don't need fines - they need support to deal with pesticides safely and legally!

We need better and more available record keeping: SB 426 will use modern technology to create and store pesticide application records and make it easy, and more equitable, to properly notify parents, students and teachers of pesticide applications, as is required by law. School districts need a simple and easy electronic record keeping system to ensure they have 4 years of complete pesticide application records, as required by law. Accuracy and transparency are reasonable goals. It is

not fair to charge parents thousands of dollars merely to get a paper copy of pesticide application records for their child's school district.

We need key stakeholders involved: Why did the 2009 School IPM law not include Oregon Department of Education or children's health experts? SB 426 will bring the agencies responsible for children's education and children's health into the decision making process on the topic of pesticides on school grounds. Stakeholders will meet 4x each year to guide the direction of school pest and pesticide management issues. How can our schools succeed without the support and input of the Department of Education?

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing about your yes vote on this bill!

Kristina Lefever
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