



## A No on SB 426 is a Yes for Science-Based Pesticide Policy

Oregon's natural resource sector depends on science-based regulation and policy related to pesticides. Pesticides protect our food and fiber supplies against damaging pests that decrease yields and threaten entire orchards and fields. Pesticides also protect our natural and urban spaces from invasive pests and noxious weeds. In schools, pesticides play a key role in protecting public health.

**Regardless of the setting, proposals for new policies or new agency authorities on pesticides must be rooted in science and evidence.**

- **Oregon's existing School IPM Law already exceeds federal regulations and is more restrictive than most other states in limiting pesticides that can be used in schools.**
- The law led to the creation of Oregon State University's (OSU) School IPM Program, which provides technical support to > 90% of Oregon's school districts annually and houses essential technical expertise. The Program collaborates with state and national agencies to provide up-to-date education to districts and has led to a 60% reduction in pesticides used in and around schools in Oregon.
- SB 426 proposes new authorities for Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to include overseeing pesticide use on school grounds. **This would duplicate existing state programming - but shift authority to a state agency that lacks the appropriate expertise.**
- SB 426 also proposes an advisory committee with very little expertise in pest management or pesticide science, to advise ODE on school pest management. **Moving programs away from established expertise to agencies and advisory committees that lack technical capacity will provide less support to school districts, not more.**

In schools, pesticides protect children against a top contributor to childhood asthma: cockroach and mouse allergens. Pesticides also include disinfectants, essential to ensuring sanitary conditions in schools. Cafeterias and classrooms commonly attract pests such as rodents, lice, and bedbugs. This is disproportionately true for schools serving low-income children. Pesticides labeled for use in school settings have been extensively reviewed for that use. Risks to children are already mitigated through use requirements, which reflect protections up to 10 times greater than those used for adults and account for the vulnerability of children.

**Given the controversy around pesticide use in Oregon, policy makers must cut through politics and misinformation to recognize the robust system already in place.** While we would support increased funding for OSU's existing program to expand technical assistance, this bill does not provide that. We cannot transfer authority over pesticide use to agencies like ODE that lack the capacity or expertise to lead on such issues. Nor can we allow advisory bodies largely lacking expertise in pesticides or pest management to oversee pesticide policies.

**Please vote no on SB 426.**