



Subject: Support for HB 2684 –Toxic Free Schools

Good Afternoon Chair Neron and Members of the Committee,

My name is Eric Richardson, a resident of Eugene, in Lane county. I reside in Rep Nathanson and Senator Mannings districts. I am here today as a community organizer with Beyond Toxics to testify in support of House Bill 2684. I have raised 5 children in our public school system and am thankful for all the support that they have received. However as I learn more about the use of pesticides on our school grounds through the work of Beyond Toxics and others, I have come to understand the need to be proactively protective of our children, as they spend more and more time on school grounds, such as at school gardens, which we wholeheartedly support. HB 2684 will add School Gardens to the school's IPM plan. School gardens are important learning spaces and food growing spaces, not to mention the health benefits of being in and using school gardens!

Additionally Many pesticides used in schools can harm pollinators that are attracted to school gardens. This bill will help to ensure school gardens are protected from pesticide drift and deposition.

Let's protect Oregon students and school staff and pollinators from unnecessary pesticide exposure, while promoting safer pest management practices in schools. I urge you to support HB 2684 to protect students, school staff, and our environment by ensuring stronger, more transparent, and science-based pest management practices in Oregon schools.

Sincerely,

Eric Richardson

Eugene, Oregon