

**Testimony to the House Committee On Education  
re: HB 2684**

**February 19, 2025**

**Crystal Weston, Environmental Health Director  
Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

**Re: Oregon Environmental Council support for HB 2684**

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC), a bi-partisan, environmental nonprofit that works at the nexus of human health and the environment, I would like to express my support for HB 2684.

OEC has focused on multiple efforts to reduce the exposure of children to toxic chemicals. Children are more vulnerable to pesticides and other toxic chemicals due to their small size, still-developing bodies, and behaviors such as playing and touching surfaces. HB 2684 recognizes that pesticide exposures risk the health of children at school- a place where families entrust their children and expect them to be safe from harm.

Pesticides include chemicals used for disinfecting surfaces, to control rodents and insects, and to kill unwanted plants. There are health effects associated with all types of pesticides. Many health effects associated with pesticides mimic other conditions, and symptoms may be difficult to recognize. Health effects from pesticide exposures depend on the dose, the type of exposure (dermal, inhalation, ingestion), and any underlying health conditions. For example:

- Herbicide exposure health effects include: possible cancer risks, damage or irritation to skin, shortness of breath. If ingested, some herbicides can be extremely dangerous.
- Insecticide exposure health effects include: neurological problems, nausea, pupil dilation or constriction, shortness of breath, changes in activity level, fatigue, headaches, upper and lower respiratory irritation, asthma exacerbation, and cough.
- Antimicrobial health effects include: skin and respiratory irritation, cough, shortness of breath.

School Integrated Pest Management Plans in Oregon call for a proactive strategy that includes school staff education about sanitation, monitoring and inspection and about pest control measures. This helps schools address pest control issues by using less dangerous chemicals and being careful about when and how pesticides are applied. HB 2684 further protects children's health in schools by ensuring that school districts review, update if needed, and readopt these plans every 5 years. This ensures that districts incorporate any new findings about pesticide health effects or laws about pesticide use.

HB 2684 also makes kids safer by requiring that school gardens are included in the school IPM plan. Children love being in school gardens, watching pollinators and forming an appreciation for healthy eating. This policy safeguards that ensures that school gardens are a safe place to learn and grow.

This bill helps school districts maintain best practices in pest management while protecting students, teachers, and school staff from exposure to harmful chemicals. 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,

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