

April 16, 2025

RE: HB 2684 (Toxic Free Schools)

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Marisol De La Torre and I am the Legislative Advocate at Oregon Just Transition Alliance (OJTA), a member-based alliance of over 20 urban and rural communities across the state of Oregon, representing thousands of people. We are a movement of frontline communities facing the brunt of environmental racism and climate change. I am writing on behalf of the alliance in support of HB 2684 (Toxic Free Schools) and its -1 amendment.

OJTA endorsed Toxic Free Schools in past sessions when it was being considered in 2023 and we remain supportive of the concept now.

Oregon's BIPOC and low-income communities have historically been disproportionately harmed by pesticides by way of their workplace exposures and at-risk communities that have more industrial activity and pollution. The Schools Integrated Pest Management law passed in 2009, which set guidelines for schools to lawfully and effectively manage pesticide applications on school grounds and minimize chemical usage to protect human health. It's been 16 years since the original statute passed and has since been updated- demonstrating a need for the legislature to prioritize environmental health.

OJTA's core philosophy of a "just transition" recognizes that frontline communities around the world have the right to clean, healthy and adequate air, water, land, food, education, and shelter. And therefore, would not be exposed to a disproportionate amount of pesticides in a place like a school.

HB 2684 would require Integrated Pest Management Plans be reviewed and updated every 5 years, and be made publicly available on school websites- thus increasing transparency, and keeping up with science.

Passing HB 2684 is an important step we can take to protect students, school employees including maintenance staff who apply pesticides and teachers who may be working in areas where pesticides have been applied. We urge you to send a clear message about the importance of the health of Oregon children by unanimously passing this bill, and support your House colleagues that moved this policy forward.

Thank you.

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