

A Statement to the State of Oregon, ATSDR and US EPA
from the Oregon Pesticide Action Workgroup and concerned residents

Statement of Principles
The State's Obligation to Safeguard Against Chemical Trespass

The widespread and unnecessary use of pesticides on private forest and public lands each year results in hazardous chemicals that invade our lives through the contamination and poisoning of our bodies, native wildlife, air, land, water, and food.

The fact is, if it were not for Oregonians acting on their own behalf to procure a reliable lab analysis of pesticide trespass, and the fact that 34 (100%) of those residents tested positive for unusually high levels of atrazine and 2,4D in their bodies, federal and state agency representatives would not be offering time or effort today. Not to be ignored, Oregonians have long presented to your agencies personal narratives, model laws and scientifically valid published research showing that exposure to toxic chemicals can and does pose a serious threat to the residents of this state. Indeed, more than three decades of requests from Oregonians, actual pleas, to have the State act to eliminate harm from pesticide drift have gone unanswered.

It was well over 50 years ago that Rachel Carson first warned us of the carcinogenic and mutagenic impacts of pesticides. She addressed the dangers of toxic chemicals to both our environment and to the people who are unfortunate enough to come in contact with them. The science has always been available as to the dangers of pesticides, and yet it was as far back as 1963 that Carson warned "we must insist that the burden of proof is on **those who would use these chemicals to prove the procedures are safe**".

It is time that the government acknowledges and takes action to eliminate pesticide trespass onto private and public property and into the bodies of our current residents and future generations of Oregonians. That commitment must begin with the following tenets of good governance.

Guiding principles of human health, human rights and environmental health:

1. The primary function of government is to protect its citizens; citizens have the right to demand that they not be poisoned by activities and policies carried out by, or regulated by, the State of Oregon.
2. Every person has the right to pursue health, happiness and a livelihood on their property without physical or toxic trespass from other properties or state agencies.
3. Oregon State Government policy must not permit public exposure to carcinogens and neurotoxins on state property.
4. Government must act with precaution to eliminate toxic trespass because EPA registration is no guarantee of safety.
5. Government must act with precaution to eliminate toxic trespass because following the pesticide label correctly is no guarantee that drift, run-off, contamination and damage will not occur.
6. Government must act with precaution to eliminate toxic trespass because there is no safety testing for synergistic and cumulative effects of chemical exposure, chronic, low-levels of chemical exposure, nor the singular and/or synergistic effects of undisclosed ("inert") ingredients.
7. Government must act with precaution because there is no tracking of or formal accounting for the cumulative effect of low-level exposures to all other living creatures and to our watersheds, although there is ample evidence of harm from long term, chronic exposure to low levels of pesticides.
8. Protecting the health of children, women, men, our communities, and our watershed is inseparable from environmental stewardship and economic sustainability. When we protect children, we protect salmon. When we protect rivers, we protect children.

The State of Oregon has a moral duty to take the following actions:

1. The State must change laws that shield pesticide applicators from the liability and legal consequences of injuring vulnerable Oregon families. (a.k.a. The “Right to Farm and Forest” Act ORS 30.930-30.947).
2. The State must reverse state preemption laws that prohibit local governments from protecting citizens against pesticide trespass and having access to information. (ORS 634.057).
3. The State of Oregon must ensure that the public is protected from pesticide in the air, water, soil and buildings on public land by working tirelessly to ensure the following:
 - a. Public and environmental health
 - b. A green and fair economy
 - c. Environmental protection
 - d. Human rights
 - e. Scientific integrity
 - f. Transparency and accountability
 - g. Full cost accounting of the environmental impacts
4. Federal and state agencies are obligated to conduct a thorough, unbiased, verifiable and fully transparent investigation of chemical trespass by funding and carrying out assessments of pesticide aerial drift, volatilization and re-volatilization, pesticide run-off and the presence of pesticides in human bodies with fully informed and democratic participation by Oregonians who have been directly impacted and without influence of corporate representatives.

Signed by members of Oregon Pesticide Action Workgroup and other concerned residents

Oregon Pesticide Action Work Group (OPAWG) is a collaborative of individual Oregonians, businesses and organizations united in our desire for, and joint efforts toward comprehensive pesticide reform, so that toxic pesticides are no longer a source of harm and environmental contamination.

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