

# Non-Toxic Oregon Guide To Building a Campaign to Protect Children's Health

This guide is designed to support local action to reduce or eliminate the use of harmful pesticides in public spaces like playgrounds and athletic fields. The information here will give you suggested next steps for building momentum in your community, taking action, and getting the attention of elected officials and the public. It's important to know that you are not alone. Pesticide use in Oregon is a growing area of concern; there are many Oregonians who feel the same way you do!

Non-toxic land management is cost effective and better for our children's health and longevity. To date, over 150 communities across the country have passed policies to restrict the use of pesticides in response to emerging evidence about potential human and environment impacts. The exact concerns differ by pesticide, but include links to cancer, developmental challenges, lower IQ, and delayed motor development. Non-toxic land management protocols protect the most vulnerable among us, such as children. Children are at greater risk because they absorb more pesticides relative to their body weight than adults and have developing organ systems. Non-toxic land care also safeguards drinking water resources and soil health.

## 1. Define Your Goals

An essential step to effective community organizing is deciding what you want to achieve. Be sure to have a clear, concise and measurable goal. Your local goal is most likely something like, "To prompt the city to reduce pesticide application by 75% over the next two years." Events and media are tools to help you achieve a clearly stated and measurable goal. Ultimately, the goal of Non Toxic Oregon is to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of highly-toxic synthetic pesticides in statewide parks, playing fields, and public spaces.

## 2. Keep Learning

Gather information on your objective and research your local issues so that you can effectively present your argument, succinctly, to others. You should know the arguments that support your goal and the arguments of your opponents. You will find a number of resources on the Beyond Toxics web site: <http://www.beyondtoxics.org/work/non-toxic-oregon/> . This section of the website is dedicated to resources related to the dangers of pesticides, health effects, safe alternatives and information about other cities that have been successful at eliminating pesticides.

## 3. Communication

Craft clear, concise messages that resonate with your target audience. It is also helpful to direct your message to specific groups within your audience. Remember that, in almost all cases, individuals act out of self-interest, so frame the issue in ways that show how someone will benefit from helping your cause and taking the actions to support policies that protect public health from toxic chemicals.

Be sure to also suggest how individuals can take action. Don't just present a problem and walk away. Encourage solutions, whether long term, short term or one-time actions. You can find examples of potential solutions on the Non Toxic Oregon page of the Beyond Toxics web site or the Non Toxic Irvine website.

#### **4. Make the Case – Why Now?**

Make your case for why the action is an important matter NOW. Help create a sense of urgency in other ways. For instance, emphasize that pesticide residues can build up over time and therefore stopping applications as soon as possible is essential to slowing bio-accumulation in the environment, humans and animals. Get creative and grab attention!

Some ideas to generate interest:

- School is starting.
- Spring is here, and weeds are growing.
- People taking their pets to the park.
- You just learned that other cities have already done it.
- Cities in Oregon are already on this path, and your city should be too.

#### **5. Identify the locus of accountability and engage with local officials**

Who is held accountable for keeping our parks and open spaces safe for our families and neighbors? Identify which local or state policy changes could help you achieve your goal and bring these ideas into your discussions, especially with government officials. You should be aware that Oregon has strict Integrated Pest Management laws for schools and state agencies. In general, working with a group and organizing with others in the community will get the attention of your local government, elected officials, the media and even more interested individuals.

- A Note about City Council Meetings

Find a schedule for your city council meetings (Google search: “your city name AND council meeting schedule”). Prepare testimony for city council public comment section. Have testimonies lined-up before you arrive. Make sure that everyone knows the angle they will be addressing and what area they are covering.

- Speak to topics from your heart – but be respectful
- Possible themes may include safety, access to public parks, schools, health, and budget
- Remind Council members that other cities in Oregon are already following or investigating this approach
- Encourage Council members to visit Non-Toxic Irvine to learn about other CA cities who have been successful at transitioning to organic land care
- Bring credible, evidence-based references to support your testimony
- Ask for a study session so that the council will listen to presentations and expert testimony about organic land care. Such presentations have already been given to the

city council in Talent, Oregon, and Beyond Toxics will help coordinate a study session for your city when appropriate.

## **6. Stick to the facts**

To garner more legitimacy and credibility, bring in expert opinions and recent research (published after 2014) as necessary and applicable. This will lend more weight to your claims and encourage others to take your suggestions seriously. It may also be possible for you to discover if state or federal agencies have done water quality or well water testing in your area. They may have data on the presence of pesticides in local water, soil or even food crops. Try to incorporate existing reports, documents and records and use a strong network of community members to promote your cause as much as possible.

Some of the local experts that may be of value to support your work could include: veterinarians, pediatricians, oncologists, organic landscapers, scientists, entomologists, parents, etc. Beyond Toxics is here to support you, do not hesitate to reach out to us at [info@beyondtoxics.org](mailto:info@beyondtoxics.org) or phone 541-465-8860. Our office hours are 9am-5pm Monday-Friday.

## **7. Work with a community group. Educate your community.**

It can also be beneficial to try to involve the support of local businesses that have similar values as your group and want to achieve similar goals. Use social media to post articles, photos, and personal thoughts about how these issues impact your life. Make it personal, and share with your social media followers, and ask them to share too. Be sure to follow Beyond Toxics and Non Toxic Rogue Valley on Facebook and Instagram: @beyondtoxics, @nontoxicrv (Facebook only)

- Reach out to representatives on School Boards, and PTA
- Create a list of local non-toxic landscapers
- Table at community events and share information
- Create a calendar of community events, locations, dates, and start networking
- Post Non Toxic Oregon flyers at physical locations in your area
- Be visible on social media – post articles, videos, and thoughts about the dangers of using pesticides
- Start a Non Toxics Facebook group or Instagram account to reach interested community members
- Encourage other people to document pesticide use when they see it

## **8. Photographing and documenting incidents**

Photos and video of a spray incident and/or its effects are invaluable as support for your argument that pesticides are an issue and should be at the forefront of the community's and policy makers' concerns. If you can, take both "before" AND "after" shots of the area being poisoned. During the pesticide application, try to get photos of who is doing the application (company logos, license plates, etc.), find out what they are using (labels, equipment, etc.), how the treatment is being applied and where the

application is happening (include street signs, landmarks, mile posts, etc.) to give your documentation context. Be polite to applicators and don't interfere with their work.

- Be sure to also note the date and time of each photo or video.
- Much of damage to plants from pesticide use occurs over time, so take many photos of the same areas days and weeks later to show how the effects have accumulated and grown.
- In your photos, it is often helpful to include a pencil, ruler or other small object to provide scale and a point of reference for how the damage has grown over time.
- Sometimes it will be beneficial to look for less obvious evidence of chemical pesticide use, such as droplets on cars or playground equipment.
- It is also extremely important to take care that you do not sacrifice your own health and safety in the pursuit of photographic evidence. If you intend to document the application, be sure to wear protective gear, take other necessary precautions and avoid exposure to drift and volatilization.
- Follow all legal rights as well. Do not trespass. If needed, get permission from landowners to photograph on their land.

After documenting the use of pesticides or the impacts of them, send this information and photo to [info@beyondtoxics.org](mailto:info@beyondtoxics.org) so that our team can compile reports to share with legislators and other public officials to raise awareness of this pervasive problem. You can also share the photos of spray incidents on your Non Toxic City Facebook page set up for you to educate community members and inspire them to get involved.

#### 9. How to Report an incident of pesticide exposure:

- **DIAL 211!** Oregon has a dedicated phone line for some types of reporting and pesticide exposures. **Start by dialing 2-1-1.** The operator will report your complaint to the appropriate state agency and you will get a call back within 24 hours.
- If someone is ill or believe a pesticide exposure has caused symptoms, go to an Urgent Care or ER to document symptoms and get medical help.
- Pesticide Violations: ODA Pesticides Division 503-986-4635 [pestx@oda.state.or.us](mailto:pestx@oda.state.or.us)
- Report Human Health Impacts/Exposures: Non-Occupational OR Dept. of Human Services Pesticide Division PEST program 503-731-4111 [justin.waltz@state.or.us](mailto:justin.waltz@state.or.us) (this is NOT a complaint line)
- Worker Health: Occupational Oregon OSHA 503-378-3272 [osha.web@state.or.us](mailto:osha.web@state.or.us)
- Crop and/or Vegetation Damage: OR Dept. of Agriculture 503-986-4550 [info@oda.state.or.us](mailto:info@oda.state.or.us)
- Water Contamination: OR Dept. of Environmental Quality 503-229-5696 [deq.info@deq.state.or.us](mailto:deq.info@deq.state.or.us)
- Fish and Wildlife Exposure: OR Dept. of Fish and Wildlife 503-947-6000 [Odfw.Info@state.or.us](mailto:Odfw.Info@state.or.us)
- If you are unsure about what to do, call Beyond Toxics for help 541-465-8860

## Resources to support Non Toxic Oregon:

[www.beyondtoxics.org](http://www.beyondtoxics.org)

<http://www.nontoxicirvine.org/nti-toolkit.html>

## Resources for Non Toxic Cities and Schools:

Those who have already done this: ex/ Irvine, CA

- Irvine PPM
- Irvine Product list
- Irvine IPM Report

Schools:

- OSU Low Impact Pesticide List
- School IPM Law
- Beyond Toxics Letter - Intent of School IPM Law

City Council:

City Council Resources:

- Table of Contents with links-
- Cost/Benefit Analysis of Organic vs Chemical Turf Management
- Sample Testimonies

General Resources:

Dangers of Pesticides:

- Journal of Pediatrics
- Older Adults
- Pregnant Women

Alternative Products:

- Organic Herbicide List
- Organic Fertilizer List
- City of Irvine/ UISD Products List
- Studies showing impact to pollinators, fish, etc.