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Modernize pesticide rules for careful applications, less harm

Statesman Journal 11:23 a.m. PT April 14, 2017



(Photo: Stock art)

Statesman Journal reporter Tracy Loew really did her research when she wrote her April 2 investigative piece, "Oregon fines for violations quadruple in 2016 as Legislature considers tighter rules."

With increased scrutiny of pesticide use because of legislation introduced by Beyond Toxics and passed with bi-partisan support in 2015, the Oregon Department of Agriculture increased their pesticide violation inspections by 25 percent and identified many more pesticide law violations. These included pesticide harm to people, pets and property.

The agency's work supports consistent testimony from people all over the state recounting how they're made sick or pets have died because of pesticide spray drift. One complaint came from a man in Curry County who said he barely had time to run inside his house and close up doors and windows as a helicopter spraying herbicides came over his ridge. No Oregonian should have to rely on the sound of the approaching chopper's blades as their only notification about nearby aerial sprays.

The Legislature is considering two bills to help prevent illegal pesticide use. SB 499 adds protections for human health and drinking water. SB 892 requires timely notifications before aerial spraying.

Modernizing Oregon's pesticide rules means more careful applications and less harm.

Lisa Arkin

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