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## Press Release

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### **Save Oregon's Pollinators Act passes with strong bi-partisan support**

*Legislation goes to Governor Kitzhaber's desk for signing*

**SALEM, ORE.** — The "Save Oregon's Pollinator's Act" (HB4139-A) passed out of the Oregon Senate on a 27-2 vote on Monday. The bill now goes to the Governor's desk where he is expected to sign it into law. The bill requires all pesticide applicators to take a course and pass a test on Bee Health and Pesticides that will be designed by Oregon State University. The bill also establishes a Task Force required to study additional bee-protection measures and to work towards offering more proactive legislation in the full 2015 session. The task force's directive includes evaluating the effectiveness of applicator licensing and other legal requirements that will comprehensively protect bees. No other state legislature has yet addressed the issue of bee decline and the suspected connection to the use of a highly toxic class of pesticides called neonicotinoids.

In response to four separate bee die-offs in the Portland area last summer that killed approximately 55,000 bumble bees, this new legislation provides a partial solution to help protect pollinators from dangerous pesticides.

Introduced by Rep. Jeff Reardon (D-Happy Valley), the original bill would have listed neonicotinoids as a restricted class of pesticides. An amended version requiring applicator education and the task force passed in both the House and Senate with strong bi-partisan support. The bill was co-sponsored by Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer (D-Portland).

The legislation was developed to address the large body of research linking the use of neonicotinoids to recent declines of honey bees and native pollinators, such as bumble bees. These pesticides are highly toxic to bees and remain in the environment for months or even years.

Lisa Arkin, Director of Beyond Toxics, points out this bill responds to the concerns of many Oregonians: "Oregonians want to protect bees. The passage of this bill starts us off in the right direction. We will be seeking permanent safeguards for pollinators as well as protection crops that are dependent on pollination. With bees, Oregon food production industries would lose hundreds of millions of dollars."

This bill was developed by a diverse group of stakeholders, including Beyond Toxics, Oregon Association of Nurseries, the Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Oregonians for Food and Shelter, and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. The group came together at Representative Reardon's urging to find short term protections to stop further harm to pollinators while the federal government undergoes a lengthy registration review of neonicotinoid pesticides to be completed by 2019.

For more background on the bill and the issues: <http://www.SaveOregonBees.org/>

*Beyond Toxics, an Oregon non-profit, has worked to guarantee environmental protections and health for all communities and residents since 2000. We expose root causes of toxic pollution, health inequities and help communities find effective, lasting solutions.*

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