

2017 Oregon State Legislature

2017 Oregon Forest Practices Act Modernization

SB 892 - Timber Aerial Spray Right-to-Know Bill

Statement of the problem

In Oregon, the law allows industrial timber companies to use helicopters to spray herbicides from the air throughout timberland. Until 2015 Oregon had no protective no-spray buffer zone to protect people and pets on their home property or children at schools. Also, under Oregon law, aerial spray applicators don't have to provide records of their pesticide use, which leaves agencies and the public unable to monitor the impacts of chemical use in forestry.

After a vicious battle at the State Legislature, Beyond Toxics was able to force the State to adopt Oregon's first-ever no spray zone to protect human health. New rules require a 60 ft. no-spray zone for homes and school buildings. Truly, this was a hard-fought outcome, but it is barely a band aid on a major hemorrhage. What's needed is to ban aerial sprays on timber lands because of the extreme risk to human health, drinking water purity and impacts to wildlife.

The 2015 Legislature also refused to pass a law requiring the Dept. of Forestry to provide timely notification to residents, schools, medical and public facilities prior to aerial pesticide applications on nearby industrial timber land. Oregonians need timely notification to protect their children, pets, livestock, gardens and drinking water.

Solution

Until Oregon acts to ban aerial sprays, we must ensure the Legislature provides as many protections as possible to people impacted by aerial sprays. Oregon can help vulnerable rural families now by passing SB 892! | SB 892 fixes two problems:

- **ADVANCED WARNING FOR AERIAL SPRAYS:** Rural residents need a warning prior to an aerial spray. A warning will help residents ensure the safety of their family, pets, livestock and gardens. E-warnings can be issued by the FERNS Notification system, a web-based, centralized database of all forestry operations managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry. The FERNS system can send out e-notifications to anyone requesting timely notification.
- **REPORTING PESTICIDE USE:** SB 892 requires a spray applicator to file spray records with the Dept. of Forestry within five days following a spray operation. The proposed rule is necessary because Oregonians have the right to know the extent of herbicide use in our watersheds, habitat lands and communities. Better communication would allow impacted communities and agencies to work collaboratively to minimize risk. Requiring the Spray Record uses existing regulatory infrastructure, such as FERNS and mandatory spray record keeping.

Introduced by Senator Michael Dembrow



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