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News Release

Senate holds hearing for bills to reform aerial spray regulations in Oregon

SB 892 will help rural Oregonians get advanced warnings before aerial sprays scheduled for hearings

SALEM, ORE. – SB 892, also known as the Timber Aerial Spray Right to Know bill, seeks to reform Oregon’s laws regarding spray notification. The bill is introduced by Senator Michael Dembrow, chair of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee. The Legislature held hearings on the issue in 2014-2015 and took testimony from dozens of rural Oregonians from coastal counties who had suffered illness from herbicide drift. Lawmakers failed to pass new policies that would allow rural residents a chance to take cover before nearby aerial herbicide sprays commence.

SB 892 would shorten the notification window for aerial helicopter sprays from 12 months to mere days in advance. SB 500 seeks to lengthen Oregon’s unusually short statute of limitations to report to damage from pesticides to the State Department of Forestry. Both bills will be heard before the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources on **Wednesday, March 22nd at 3 PM:** Hearing Room C of the Capitol Building in Salem.

SB 892 fixes two problems: 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. The Oregon Department of Forestry has adopted the FERNS Notification system, a web-based, centralized database of all forestry operations managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry. The system allows timber operators to file their spray plans online and enables Oregonians to check for updated information. E-warnings can be issued by the FERNS system. SB 892 also 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 need accurate information on the extent of herbicide use in our watersheds, habitat lands and communities. Currently, no pesticide spray information is provided to the public or to other state agencies.

SB 500 addresses a key weakness in current law: Currently, people experiencing harm, loss or damage from another's use of a pesticide have only 60 days to file a Report of Loss form to submit to the Oregon Department of Agriculture. If the form is not filed within 60 days, an Oregon resident loses their right to take their property damage case to court. The form requires specific information about the spray incident including details pertaining to the pesticide applicator and the chemicals that were used. Often, a person experiencing harm or loss from pesticide exposure may not have the necessary information to file the Report of Loss within the brief 60-day time frame, or may not immediately understand the nature of the harm.

See [this page](#) for more specifics about the two bills under consideration.

<http://www.beyondtoxics.org/2017-oregon-state-legislative-bills/forestry-practices-reform/>

For more information call Lisa Arkin: office: 541-465-8860 or cell: 541-520-2695.

Beyond Toxics works to guarantee environmental protections and health for all communities and residents. We expose root causes of toxic pollution and help communities find effective, lasting solutions.

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