

# Oregon bills call for restrictions on potentially harmful pesticides

[Tracy Loew](#), Salem Statesman Journal | Published 9:00 a.m. PT March 23, 2019 | Updated 7:58 a.m. PT March 25, 2019

Four bills that would regulate pesticide use and reporting are scheduled for what's expected to be contentious public hearings throughout the day Tuesday.

Two bills would ban or restrict certain classes of chemicals that show evidence of harm to pollinators and human health. Another two would make more information about commercial pesticide use available to regulators and the public.

[Senate Bill 853](https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Measures/Overview/SB853) (<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Measures/Overview/SB853>) and [House Bill 3058](https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Measures/Overview/HB3058) (<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Measures/Overview/HB3058>) both would make neonicotinoid pesticides available only to licensed applicators, and would ban chlorpyrifos, a widely used organochloride pesticide.

"The purpose of the legislation is to provide crucial protections to people, pollinators and wildlife, said Lisa Arkin, executive director of Beyond Toxics, a Eugene-based environmental group.

When used improperly, the neonicotinoid class of pesticides can kill bees and other pollinators.

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## Behind case for pesticide restrictions

Oregon reported the nation's largest bee-kill in 2013, when neonicotinoid pesticides were improperly sprayed on trees in a Wilsonville Target parking lot. The state investigated three more similar incidents that summer.

The next year, [another mass bee kill \(/story/tech/science/environment/2014/06/18/bumblebee-die-eugene-investigation/10804135/\)](https://www.oregonlive.com/tech/science/environment/2014/06/18/bumblebee-die-eugene-investigation/10804135/) occurred in a Eugene apartment complex parking lot.

The incidents prompted Oregon legislators to introduce bills banning or restricting neonicotinoid pesticides in 2015 and 2017. Both died in committee.

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Oregon Department of Agriculture inspector Isaak Stapleton examines the honeybee hives of Jon Beaty in Estacada in June after they suffered mass bee die off. (Photo: Thomas Patterson / Statesman Journal file)

Katie Fast, executive director of the pesticide industry group Oregonians for Food and Shelter, said state regulators determined all the bee kills were misapplications and imposed fines, showing that current regulations work.

And, Fast said, restricting the pesticide would mean homeowners could not use it to treat fleas and ticks on pets, for bedbugs, or for their gardens.

Chlorpyrifos, meanwhile, has been banned for home use since 2001.

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In 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reported there was sufficient evidence that low levels of the chemical, sold under the brand name Lorsban, can affect brain development in children.

The agency was moving toward banning chlorpyrifos, but in March 2017 the [Trump administration reversed course](https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/tech/science/environment/2017/03/30/epa-head-rejects-pesticide-ban-recommended-agency/99842500/). ([/story/tech/science/environment/2017/03/30/epa-head-rejects-pesticide-ban-recommended-agency/99842500/](https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/tech/science/environment/2017/03/30/epa-head-rejects-pesticide-ban-recommended-agency/99842500/))

Fast said there are few alternatives for farmers to use for pest problems.

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“Chlorpyrifos is an important product for farmers across Oregon,” she said. “It’s regulated for a multitude of different crops, including many vegetable crops and seed production we do specifically in the Willamette Valley.”

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**Requiring more pesticide information**

House Bill 3044 (<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Measures/Overview/HB3044>) would require aerial pesticide sprayers to record application conditions, and submit the information to the Department of Environmental Quality. DEQ would then make the information public on its website.

DEQ would have to notify nearby property owners if it determined pesticides drifted outside the application site. Pesticide applicators would face a fine of up to \$50,000 for falsifying or delaying reports.

Pesticide users are supporting an alternative proposal.

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House Bill 2980 (<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Measures/Overview/HB2980>) would extend the sunset date, by a decade, for a currently unused program that required pesticide users to report to the Oregon Department of Agriculture, at least once a year, the name and amount of all the pesticide products they used.

Under the program, individual reports are confidential, but data could be aggregated for use in state research and planning.

The program, created in 1999 by House Bill 3602, became operational in 2002. It was shelved in 2009 after the Legislature cut its funding in response to a state budget shortfall. It is scheduled to sunset June 30, 2019.

“Our feeling is, if the Legislature and citizens are interested in pesticide reporting and data, that’s the mechanism it should be,” Fast said.

### **Pesticide hearings**

The Oregon Legislature has scheduled hearings on four bills dealing with pesticide use and reporting for Tuesday, March 26, at the Oregon Capitol:

**HB 3044** (<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Measures/Overview/HB3044>), dealing with information about aerial spraying, will be heard at 8 a.m. in Hearing Room E.

**SB 853** (<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Measures/Overview/SB853>), banning or restricting two chemicals, will be heard at 1 p.m. in Hearing Room C.

**HB 2980** (<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Measures/Overview/HB2980>), reviving the pesticide use registry, and **HB 3058** (<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Measures/Overview/HB3058>), banning or restricting two chemicals, will be heard at 3 p.m. in Hearing Room D.

Contact the reporter at [tloew@statesmanjournal.com](mailto:tloew@statesmanjournal.com), 503-399-6779 or follow at [Twitter.com/Tracy\\_Loew](https://twitter.com/Tracy_Loew)

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