

Herbicide opponents to present initiative

By William Kogut
Of the Emerald

A statewide herbicide safety initiative that would severely restrict the use of phenoxy herbicides will be presented to the Oregon Secretary of State Monday, the Keep Oregon Oregon committee announced Thursday.

The proposed initiative would ban the aerial spraying of phenoxy herbicides (such as 2,4-D, Silvex and 2,4,5-T), but it would not ban manual spraying. Sale of phenoxy herbicides would be limited to individuals licensed through the state Department of Agriculture.

The initiative, sponsored by the Keep Oregon Oregon committee, was made public at a press conference in the EMU. The group is a newly formed political committee dedicated to developing grassroots support for conservation initiatives.

"The herbicide safety initiative would guarantee Oregonians the right to reasonable protection from toxic herbicides and the right to know when herbicides were used in their vicinity," said Randal O'Toole, a representative of Keep Oregon Oregon.

The proposed initiative would also make it mandatory for forest landowners conducting herbicide spraying to notify nearby landowners, residents and water users in advance of spraying. Notices would be posted on public roads within one-half mile of the forest. In addition, public parks to be sprayed with herbicides would be posted with notices in advance.

In order to get the initiative on the November, 1980 statewide ballot, 60,000 signatures will have to be gathered by July 3rd of next year. The gathering of signatures could begin within three weeks, O'Toole said.

O'Toole said he expects the timber industry to spend at least half a million dollars to campaign against the initiative. His group expects to raise from \$25,000 to \$50,000 for its campaign in favor of the measure, he said.

Appearing at the news conference in support of the proposed initiative were Lane County Commissioner Jerry Rust and Lincoln County Commissioner Andy Zedwick.

Rust said he expects the timber industry to argue that the initiative will cause a loss of jobs.

"The timber industry will also argue



Photo By Martha Stanton

Randal O'Toole

that the only people behind this initiative are people out to protect their marijuana fields," Rust said.

There has never been a study verifying the effectiveness of herbicides, he said.

"If herbicides do what they're sup-

posed to do," Zedwick said, "why is it that we now have in this state a 25-percent overcut? If herbicides had been doing the job they were supposed to be doing for the past 15 or 20 years that we've been spraying, then we would have an overproduction of timber, not an underproduction."

The chief petitioners — persons who allow their names to appear on all petitions — for the initiative are all medical doctors: Renee Stringham, Lincoln City, James Scott, Mapleton, and John Farquhar of Medford.

Rust said doctors opposing herbicides have been denounced as quacks by the timber industry. "That's a pretty sorry state of affairs when you have the timber industry denouncing professionals."

Rust also said Oregon State University scientists who have argued in favor of herbicides are "masquerading as scientists." There is a strong link between Dow Chemical (manufacturer of herbicides), the federal government and "that land-grant college to the north," he said.

"The people don't need to be scientists to know they're being poisoned by their own government."

Parties debate including independents in primary

By Doug Fick
Of the Emerald

The rapid increase in the number of Oregonians registered as political independents necessitates the introduction of open Oregon primary elections, said state Rep. Bill Rutherford, R-McMinnville, Thursday during a Rubicon Society luncheon.

"There are now 167,000 independents in Oregon," Rutherford said. "During the last two years independent registration has been greater than Republican and Democratic registration combined. All of these people are disenfranchised — they are excluded."

Rutherford urged support for an Oregon initiative petition, now in circulation, that would allow political parties to open their primaries to independent voters.

Citing Gov. Victor Atiyeh and former Gov. Tom McCall as influential Oregonians who have called for passage of the measure, Rutherford said a 1976 poll revealed that 76 percent of those interviewed favored open primaries.

Petition supporters need to gather 50,000 signatures by next May to place the measure on the ballot.

"We have a very strong list of supporters and the polls show that the public, if it voted on this issue, would support it overwhelmingly," he said.

However, state Democratic Party Chairer Jim Klonoski emphasizes that the Democratic national charter prohibits open Democratic primaries in national elections.

Although Rutherford pointed to statistics that show strong support for open primaries in both parties, Klonoski strongly objected to the idea.

"My god, that's scary as hell. The open primary tends to make a plaything of the vote," Klonoski said.

Calling the drive to put an open primary measure on the ballot a Republican effort to regain equality with the majority Democratic Party, Klonoski emphasized that opening Oregon primaries would severely weaken the power of both parties.

"Parties are growing weaker anyway, and if they grow any weaker you would have Ayatollahs running around the country with small interest groups," Klonoski said. "There seems to be a death wish in all this."

Rutherford disagreed sharply with Klonoski's analysis.

Both parties must open their primaries to independents if they are to maintain strong ties with the people of this state, he said, calling participation by independents essential to expose the parties to new philosophies.

Klonoski denied Rutherford's claim that open primaries would increase political participation, pointing to a 1976 study which

showed that open primaries actually decrease participation.

Independent voters, unaffected by party ties, will not have the guidance of party influence and

consequently will not feel a need to vote, he said.

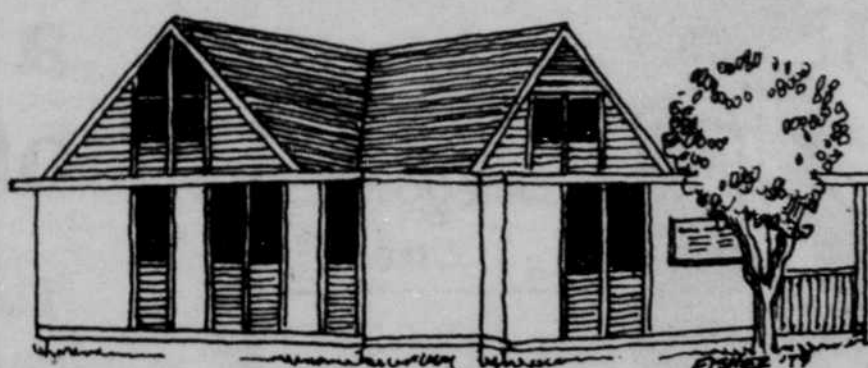
"Open means less participation," Klonoski said.

Klonoski also questioned the

right of independents to decide which party candidate is elected. "We can't have non-Democrats determining who our candidates are," he said.

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