



Pesticide Drift

Do fish have more protection than children?

Salmon in the Pacific Northwest are protected from aerial application of pesticides by buffer zones. The zones prevent chemical spraying for 100 yards from salmon streams. But children in rural Oregon schools are not protected from the same effects of "pesticide drift." Oregon Toxics Alliance (OTA) and Forestland Dwellers want to know why salmon are protected but the children in local schools like Coburg and Thurston Elementary are not.

Oregon Senate Bill 20, co-sponsored by Sen. Vicki Walker and Rep. Paul Holvey, would have banned aerial spraying within one mile of school property during the academic year and within one mile of a road that services a school property during morning and afternoon commute times. It would also have prevented spraying of pesticides within five miles of a school without first filing a written plan.

According to Walker's office, the bill will not be heard in the 2007 legislative session. An interim committee on the pesticide buffer zone issue will be appointed after the legislative session ends, a staffer said. But the bill won't come up again until the 2009 session.

Many people feel protecting Oregon's children from pesticides and herbicides is an urgent issue.

According to Lynn Bowers of Forestland Dwellers, most roadside spraying is done at night and in the early morning hours. Chemicals such as 2,4-D (2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid) are sprayed until 6 a.m. "Kids wait for the school bus in fresh spray," she said.

2,4-D is one of the most common herbicides used in Lane County. It is used against broad-leafed weeds. It was also a component of the controversial defoliant Agent Orange used during the Vietnam War.

Researchers have linked 2,4-D to prostate cancer in farmers, reduced sperm counts and symptoms such as nausea and vomiting.

Another commonly used chemical in aerial and other methods of pesticide spraying is glyphosate. Also used on broad-leafed weeds, glyphosate was first patented by Monsanto and sold under the name Roundup.

Glyphosate is the most used herbicide in the world. While studies have not linked it to Roundup to cancer, there is debate as to whether it may cause spontaneous abortion.* Its use has been linked to toxicity in fish and amphibians.

Monsanto also creates genetically modi-

fied crops such as "Roundup Ready Soybeans" that are bred to be tolerant of glyphosates.

Lisa Arkin, executive director of OTA, said between 2001 and 2005 there were four incidents of pesticide drift onto Oregon schools. "We don't know the health outcome for those children," she said. "A child exposed at the age of 6 may not have lymphoma til 46."

Arkin is concerned that without community input, the interim committee on pesticide buffer zones won't be formed.

According to *Pesticides and Human Health*, pesticides have been linked to childhood incidences of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Pesticide use may also be linked to increased risk of childhood leukemia and brain cancers.

Arkin and Bowers cite numerous studies that point to the strong effects that pesticide exposure has on children. Pesticide-exposed children are smaller and have a greater intake of air and food relative to their body weight. They are also still developing, and young children tend to place their hands on their faces or in their mouths.

OTA and Forestland Dwellers have compiled years of data on chemical spraying near rural schools. Their mapping of the spray areas show years of spraying within one mile of school playgrounds and sports fields. Between 2004 and 2006, their statistics show, the Oregon Department of Forestry sprayed herbicides within one mile of eight Lane County schools, including Twin Oaks, Lorane, and Crow-Applegate Elementary schools.

Mapping also showed that Mohawk High School has been directly beneath aerial spraying, which Lane Education Service District called "alarming" in their written testimony on SB 20.

Opponents to the bill, mainly foresters and farmers, claim that the school buffer bill would force them out of business and that statements on cancer are exaggerated. **EW**

The EW provides a weekly listing of upcoming pesticide spray schedules courtesy of Forestland Dwellers. Anyone interested in joining the spray notification network or concerned about an upcoming spray can call them at 342-8332.



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