



February 13, 2018

Support for HB 4126—Product Stewardship for Household Hazardous Waste

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the House Energy and Environment Committee,

On behalf of our thousands of members across Oregon, Beyond Toxics strongly urges your support for HB 4126 establishing a statewide product stewardship program for Household Hazardous Wastes. We believe HB 4126 is important because it will provide increased opportunities for Oregonians to safely dispose of hazardous products in an environmentally sound manner.

Beyond Toxics, founded in 2000, is dedicated to the pursuit of environmental justice. We serve a unique role in Oregon because our organization merges environmental advocacy work with racial justice and human rights values. HB 4126 can help vulnerable populations, including low-income households and communities of color, avoid stockpiling these wastes until they have an opportunity to take them to a proper disposal site. This Household Hazardous Wastes (HHW) stewardship program will increase the availability of collection opportunities through more events or more hours of operation at permanent facilities, thus creating more convenient and equal access to proper waste disposal.

HHW requires special management - Household hazardous waste (HHW) is a term applied to many everyday products we use in and around our home whose leftovers need special handling and disposal. Examples include flammable products including solvents; home and garden products containing herbicides or pesticides; and highly corrosive or reactive products like oven cleaners and pool chemicals.

That is why it is critical that HHW be collected and disposed of by trained professionals. We know that offering convenient disposal centers is critical to keeping hazardous waste out of trash, landfills and neighborhood dump sites. In fact, Beyond Toxics has partnered with Lane County to hold special hazardous waste collection events for environmental justice neighborhoods. These were highly successful, but ultimately unsustainable due to cost. Counties should not have to shoulder the costs for such programs because their abilities to fund HHW services are limited. There is strong competition for limited county resources from public safety, public health and transportation services. A number of counties have depended on the Department of Environmental Quality to provide funding for HHW collection events in their area. Historically, the state's ability to fund these has been subject to interruptions during tight budgets and economic downturns.

In summary, Beyond Toxics supports this legislation because:

1. **Product stewardship is a proven and successful strategy** – Oregon is a leader in establishing programs where producers take responsibility for the management of the end-of-life of their products. These include the Oregon E-Cycles program to manage electronic wastes; PaintCare to collect and recycle paint; and our iconic and recently expanded Bottle Bill.
2. **Product makers will take responsibility for their products** - Rather than put the onus on counties to increase rates for residential and commercial customers, the legislation requires manufacturers of hazardous material to pay for the collection, transportation, and disposal of their products. These costs can be internalized by the manufacturer.
3. **Importantly, HB 4126 will reduce risks to human health and the environment** - If these products are not properly managed, they pose multiple risks: to children from poisonings or other exposures; to solid waste workers on collection routes and at disposal facilities from chemical reactions or releases; and to the environment from spills or through other pathways.

We strongly urge your support for HB 4126.

Sincerely,

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