



Our Mission

OTA works for all Oregonians to expose root causes of toxic pollution and help communities find solutions that protect human and environmental health.

Rejoice! Oregon Schools Will Adopt IPM by Law! By Lisa Arkin, Executive Director

As we go to print, schools all over Oregon will be on their way to becoming much healthier and safer places for children. The School Integrated Pest Management Bill to reduce pesticide use at schools just passed both the Oregon Senate and House with resounding bi-partisan support and will soon land on the Governor's desk!

Senate Bill 637, known as the School IPM bill, requires all schools, K-college, to adopt a proactive strategy using long-term prevention of pest problems and simultaneously protecting the health and safety of students, staff and faculty. The bill also specifically protects ecosystem health. The law provides model IPM language that puts Oregon in the vanguard for health protections.

Research on IPM clearly shows that preventative steps that disrupt the establishment and breeding of pests is cheaper and more effective than spraying chemicals.

OTA members can take credit for supporting the many months of work that went into winning over the hearts and minds of school administrators, teachers, and medical professionals. OTA started the campaign to protect school children from pesticides in 2007 and we have held fast to our conviction that this issue was winnable. We formed the Oregon Pesticide Action Workgroup (OPAWG), a feisty group of dozens of folks from seven different counties who are tackling key pesticide policy problems. Along with OTA staff and board members, many OPAWG members advocated for school IPM, sat in on legislative meetings and helped with the research ultimately leading to the passage of the bill.

OTA continues to take action on the environmental health impacts of pesticide use. ◇◇◇◇◇◇

Pets and Toxics - what you should know

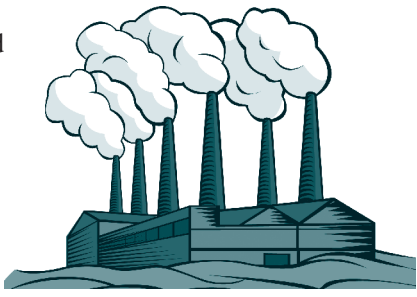
By John Jordan-Cascade, OTA Staff

Summer is the time when our thoughts turn to getting out in the sun and playing in our yards with family, friends and our pets. OTA is helping to raise awareness of how the dangers of toxics in our lives could affect our kids and pets. Plenty of research exists to show that both of them are highly vulnerable to the toxics we use in everyday life. When we use herbicides on our lawn or pesticides in and around our home, there are consequences to be aware of. The dangers to kids and pets don't stop with pesticides. Many pet products contain chemicals that are known to cause cancer, premature aging and nerve damage. And your pet becomes vulnerable when they chew on some of these products. -- Please turn to Pets & Toxics -->



Why is the Eugene Biomass plant an environmental justice issue?

By Lisa Arkin, Executive Director



Generating energy by incinerating wood products (anything from whole trees to slash to sawdust) is called biomass. But don't let the prefix 'bio' fool you - burning wood is not safe for the biosphere because it creates excessive air pollution. An 18-megawatt biomass plant proposed for West Eugene would spew nearly 460 tons of pollutants into the air and another 17 tons of specific hazardous air toxins. Some of these pollutants contribute to greenhouse gases (e.g., nitrogen oxide, volatile organic compounds) and others are just plain poisonous to people living downwind (e.g., carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, formaldehyde, dioxin, etc). The biomass plant is a project of the Seneca Timber Company. Oregon Toxics Alliance is raising awareness about the problem of air toxins in regards to the upcoming public hearings that will be held by the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency, set for this summer.

Our analysis shows that the neighborhoods directly downwind from the proposed plant will bear the brunt of adverse health problems that are attributable to its air pollution. By consulting census data, maps and federal and local toxics data, OTA has determined that West Eugene has a far larger share of people who are poor, disabled, or of Latino heritage. Many of the biomass down-winders have fewer...

Please turn to Biomass Plant -->

News in Brief

• **Persistent Toxics in Oregon:** OTA gave input to and is tracking the outcome of a new Oregon requirement to assess and reduce toxics that persist and/or accumulate in animals and the environment. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) listed 140 toxins with the potential to cause cancer and endocrine disruption. 51 of these are pesticides or herbicides.

• **Gypsy Moth Spray:** After weighing options to take community action on a state-mandated aerial application of Foray 48B to kill a potential gypsy moth outbreak in Eugene, OTA fought hard to ensure that the Department of Agriculture project was based on the principles of public health protections and community right-to-know. While we remain opposed to aerial sprays over residential areas, we are pleased that we demanded and succeeded in making official information available stating that pregnant women, children, and people with allergies, immune deficiencies and heart disease are more at risk for adverse impacts and should take special precautions to avoid exposure.

• **Invasive Weeds and Environmental Protection:** Based on a tip from an OTA member, OTA was able to block a bill that would have allowed massive uses of pesticide poisons to be sprayed on invasive weeds all over the State. Instead, Oregon Toxics Alliance successfully fought for a law specifying that weed control must be conducted *“in a manner that minimizes risks to human health, non-target organisms, native fish and wildlife habitat, watersheds and the environment.”* That is the first time the Legislature has passed a bill calling out the necessity of protecting people and the environment when using pesticides. The bill awaits the Governor’s signature.



• **Oregon is a “No Top Off” state:** As of July 1st this year, no gas station attendant may “top off” or overfill your gas tank. This law, an outcome of OTA’s Benzene Reduction Project, will cut back on emissions of the carcinogen benzene, known to cause childhood leukemia & harm gas station attendants.

• **Hazardous Waste Round-Up:** OTA is a partner with Lane County to collect hazardous waste from Eugene homes to help get pesticides and other hazards out of homes, gardens and local waterways.

• **The bill to ban field burning** is in flux. As we go to press, it’s being considered by a joint House and Senate Committee. See our website for the latest news on this crucial legislation and for ideas on what you can do to advance its passage.

Your membership renewal letter should have arrived in the mail by now. Please take a moment to open your mail and send in as generous a donation as you can to **Oregon Toxics Alliance**.

Pets & Toxics (continued...)

Why are pets at risk?

Toxic Chemicals: Pets can ingest tiny amounts of toxic chemicals over a number of years that accumulate and concentrate heavy metals and a variety of dangerous chemicals in their bodies. These toxins increase the risk of cancer and other diseases and may eventually cause irreversible damage to your pet’s organs.

Pesticides: Pesticides are designed to be nerve toxins. The level of pesticide in flea bombs and flea collars may have harmful consequences for pets and the children who play with them. Pets can absorb these poisons from lawns and garden products too.

Ideas for Alternatives

- Use organic foods, treats and shampoos when possible.
- Use pine or wheat litter, or litter made of various grain hulls; wheat litters are a good alternative for litter that clumps; look for other plant-based litters.
- Find non-toxic toys and bedding.
- Use glass or ceramic food and water bowls that do not leach chemicals.
- Several furniture manufacturers now produce furniture, carpet padding and futons that are free of PBDE flame retardants. Some fibers such as wool are naturally flame-retardant. Ask about PBDEs before any new purchase.
- Flea treatment and prevention tips...Diatomaceous earth (D.E.) comes from algae and is the only animal-safe pesticide; keep home clean; practice proper and regular grooming; feed pet proper food; shampoo with organic soap and use a lemon rinse to keep fleas at bay. Natural topical preparations made from essential oils are available that can be sprayed on pets as a repellent.

For much more about the dangers of chemicals to your pets and ideas for simple, safe alternatives, please visit our web page dedicated to this issue: www.protectyourpets.org. Find more about pesticides in general here: www.oregontoxics.org. ◆◆◆◆◆

OTA People Watching...

New Staff...

John Jordan-Cascade comes to us as a new staff person after many years and a wide variety of experiences at PeaceHealth. He will be helping with public education and keeping the web site up to date. John was involved in the successful campaign to establish Eugene’s Right to Know ordinance in 1996 and later served one term on the Eugene Toxics Board formed by that initiative. John has also been involved in electoral politics in the last few years helping with Mayor Piercy’s first mayoral campaign, City Councilor Andrea Ortiz’s initial run for office and the ballot measure campaign to establish citizen police oversight.

Our wonderful volunteers...



OTA is grateful beyond measure to the many volunteers who have been putting in a lot of time to further the work we do, so we thought we’d introduce our readers to a few them.

Debbie Hebert:

Debbie has volunteered with OTA for the past year and a half. She’s primarily been involved in general office administration, but has also helped with mailings, tabling at OTA events and research for the pesticides and schools campaign. She and her husband are avid gardeners.

Hannah Satein:

Hannah is a senior at the University of Oregon majoring in Planning, Public Policy and Management and will be working as an intern at OTA this summer. About working at OTA, Hannah says, “I’m really excited to get hands-on experience researching and learning about the environmental policy issues OTA is tackling.” Hannah will be researching global warming and toxics.



Diane Durrett:

Diane has been seen in the office doing a wide variety of tasks, from completely organizing our office closet (Yay, Diane!) to accompanying Lisa Arkin to testify at legislative hearings in Salem. Diane says, “For many years I’ve had a strong desire to contribute time to a worthy organization that works towards making the environment cleaner. I’m finally putting my action where my desire is - and it’s extremely rewarding.”

Josh Vincent:

Josh has worked as a community organizer and team leader with grassroots environmental advocacy groups in Michigan, Ohio and in his home state of Texas. Now a Eugene transplant and an art student at the University of Oregon, he is assisting Oregon Toxics Alliance with research regarding air quality and environmental justice in Lane County.



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Biomass Plant (continued...)

...resources to pay for the medical needs and expenses that will undoubtedly result from breathing air polluted by biomass smoke.

Accumulating pollution from the Union Pacific rail yard and other nearby industrial sites cause these Eugene residents to receive the greatest exposure to cancer, heart disease and asthma-causing chemicals. Research published in May 2009 states that people exposed to small air pollution particles increase their risk of heart attack by a whopping 24 percent! In fact, for many air toxins emitted in West Eugene (acetaldehyde, formaldehyde, naphthalene, styrene) the BioMass burner would be one of the largest emitters. This is unfair and disproportionate pollution exposure for neighborhoods that are historically the most impacted, the most socially disadvantaged and the least represented.

When energy production sacrifices human health and the quality of the air, we believe it no longer qualifies as “sustainable.” What is sustaining about a community whose air is unfit to breathe for everyone, and especially those closest to the concentration of polluting industries?

OTA Invites Your Ideas!

Oregon Toxics Alliance will be celebrating our 10th anniversary in 2010! This is a good time to look back at all that we have accomplished and then look forward to the many ways we will continue making a big impact on Oregon's environmental health policies. The staff and Board of Directors are doing strategic planning for our next few years of work. We would love to hear from our members and supporters about your ideas for an updated name and logo and future program areas. This is an important time for OTA to both root down and make shifts in our work plan, so we feel it is important to hear from you! Please call our office or take our five minute survey online, now linked from our home page:

www.oregontoxics.org. Look for the "Take Our Survey" button. ◆◆◆◆◆



OTA Extends a BIG Thank You! to our web host: HEROweb!

www.hero-web.com



Since the very beginnings of Oregon Toxics Alliance, our web presence and email accounts have been generously hosted by HEROweb Custom Design & Development services of Fall Creek, Oregon. That is nine years of generosity! Owner Michael Stearns is devoted to supporting community projects and he personally volunteers for many good causes. Michael's company builds online businesses through web development and marketing services, all under one roof.

Take your website from zero to HERO

We are very grateful – you are definitely OTA's hero, HEROweb! (<http://www.hero-web.com>)



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