

February 9, 2006

Brian Amme  
Project Manager  
BLM  
P.O. Box 120000  
Reno, NV  
89520-0006

Dear Mr. Amme,

1 I am writing to you in regards to the proposed increase in pesticide use in BLM lands in the state of Oregon. According to an article written by Diane Dietz in the January 16, 2006 Eugene Register-Guard, the BLM "proposes to triple the amount of land on which it uses herbicides in the Western United States." Specifically, "The area sprayed in Western Oregon would increase to 70,000 acres annually, up from... 21,000 acres."

2 The beauty and serenity of Oregon's wild lands calm and nourish the human soul. Although I live in the city, I am a camper and a hiker. I cannot think of a more enjoyable way to spend time with my family than in the outdoors.

3 I appreciate the struggle that native plants engage in against invasive species. My husband and I enjoy learning about and identifying wild plants and understanding their traditional food or medicinal uses. Invasive non-native species upset the balance in ecosystems, making it harder for the native species to compete. Something does need to be done to reduce the reach of some of these species.

4 However, I am alarmed by the suggestion of increasing pesticide usage to solve this problem. Pesticides are poison. Some pesticides have been linked to increased incidences of cancer. My concern is particularly acute as my four-year old daughter has a common genetic mutation (Nuerofibromatosis Type 1) that significantly increases her risk of soft-tissue cancers. The idea of taking my family to sleep on ground that has been sprayed with toxic chemicals or to have my daughter playing with chemical-coated plant matter she finds lying around seems like reckless endangerment. Not to mention eating the invasive Himalayan blackberry. In addition, the pesticides used on BLM land will enter the watershed and eventually wind up in our rivers, where they could have an impact on fish, waterfowl, and swimmers. I don't believe that I am alone in my concerns, as many parents today seem to be realizing that children, especially, are vulnerable to the effects of pesticides on their still developing bodies.

5 I urge you to safe-guard the health of all children who enjoy nature by finding other alternatives to the use of pesticides to solve the invasive species problem.

Sincerely,

*Rebecca L. Matsumoto*

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