Oregon Environmental Council
It's Your Oregon

Protecting the health of Oregon schoolchildren and school employees through a cost effective, common-sense approach to reducing environmental health hazards.

Oregon Healthy Schools Legislation

Oregon Healthy Schools Legislation will create high performing schools that reduce student and staff exposure to chemicals of concern, improve academic performance and staff productivity, integrate green building principles in the design and construction of school facilities, and reduce facility maintenance and operational costs.

OEC worked with an advisory committee (partners listed on back) to develop stakeholder-informed legislation, which will facilitate and require:

- the use of green cleaning products **(SB 668)**
- the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques **(SB 637)**
- a replacement timeline for cleaning up diesel school buses **(HB 2795)**
- the use of green building design and construction techniques in all new schools, remodels, and capital improvement projects **(HB 3357)**

Oregon's Children Deserve Safe and Healthy Environments

Children, more than adults, are vulnerable to and may be negatively affected by exposure to environmental hazards. Research shows that the environment also plays a key role in academic performance. During the school year, children spend 30-50% of their time in and around schools. Ensuring that schools are environmentally healthy, designed to foster academic performance, and safe is particularly important to children's health and achievement.

The EPA estimates that human exposure to indoor air pollutants is commonly two to five, and up to 100 times, higher than outdoor levels. The health threats caused by the presence of certain chemicals in the school environment result in increased costs to individual schools, cleanup expenses, decreased academic performance, and increased student absenteeism.

In 1999, the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education conducted a survey that found that approximately 20% of schools had unsatisfactory indoor air/environmental quality.

WHY TAKE ACTION?

- Asthma, which is triggered by common indoor contaminants, is the leading chronic disease cause of school absenteeism. In 2003, American school children missed 12.8 million school days due to asthma attacks.
- Pesticides commonly used in Oregon schools have been associated with cancer, hormone system damage, reproductive problems, and nervous system damage.
- Diesel exhaust is linked to asthma, cardiovascular disease, cancer, regional haze and global warming.
- Volatile organic compounds (VOC) in cleaning products can affect indoor air quality and also contribute to smog formation in outdoor air.

Common environmental contaminants that impact air quality in schools include cleaning products, pesticides, mold, animal dander, formaldehyde off-gassing from furniture, and vehicle emissions. Common-sense policies relating to the operations of Oregon schools can improve air quality.

A Cost Effective Way to Enhance Student Learning

Oregon schools currently procure products on a school-by-school or even an employee-by-employee basis. Cost reductions can occur by standardizing the cleaning products used in schools. **(SB 668)**

Integrating "sustainable" or "green" building practices into the construction of state buildings **(HB 3357)** is a wise financial investment, improves academic performance, and benefits the health of the environment. In one comprehensive analysis of the financial costs and benefits of green building, it was found that a minimal upfront investment of about 2% of construction costs typically yields life cycle savings of over ten times the initial investment. For example, an initial upfront investment of up to $100,000 to incorporate green building features into a $5 million project would result in a savings of at least $1 million over the life of the building, assumed conservatively to be 20 years.

The financial benefits of green buildings include reduced energy use, waste disposal, and water costs, lower environmental and emissions costs, lower operations and maintenance costs, and savings from increased productivity and health.

Advisory Committee Participants*

Oregon Education Association

Oregon School Employees Association

Oregon School Board Association

Oregon Department of Human Services

Oregon Sustainable Schools Initiative

American Lung Association

Oregon Asthma Program

Oregon Department of Education

Oregon School Facilities Manager Association

Green Building Services

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Portland Public Schools

Lane County School District

Salem-Kaiser School District

Metro Regional Government, Waste Reduction

Multnomah County Health Department

Upstream Public Health

**Participation in advisory committee does not necessarily indicate endorsement of final legislative concepts.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Renee Hackenmiller-Paradis
Program Director
503-222-1963 x110
reneep@oeconline.org

Andrea Salinas
Legislative Director
971-221-2653
andreas@oeconline.org

Oregon Environmental Council
222 NW Davis Street, Suite 309 | Portland, OR 97209-3900
p: 503-222-1963 f: 503-222-1405 info@oeconline.org www.oeconline.org