

Report to the Legislature

Pesticide Application Safety Committee

December 2019

SSSB 5550



Prepared by Wayne Clifford

Office of Environmental Public Health Sciences

Division of Environmental Public Health



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Executive Summary

In 2019, the Washington State Legislature passed [Substitute Senate Bill 5550](#) establishing the Pesticide Application Safety Committee (PASCO). The committee consists of eleven members, and co-chaired by the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture.

The PASCO is tasked with developing recommendations for improving the safety of pesticide application. These recommendations will be identified in an annual report to the Legislature through the year 2025. The Legislature also established an advisory workgroup to assist the PASCO to collect information, and to make recommendations to the PASCO.

An initial report of the committee's progress is due to the Legislature by January 2020.

The PASCO held its first meeting on October 24, 2019. This meeting focused primarily on the creation and adoption of a charter and shaping the membership of the Advisory Workgroup.

The committee discussed the following goals:

- Having one database that holds all pesticide application data.
- Understanding how different agencies gather data, support the industry, and support workers.
- Exploring how new technology can support future decisions and provide real-time information to pesticide applicators.
- Determining if regulatory framework creates silos.
- Reviewing certain pesticides in light of current research and developing recommendations that improve public health and pesticide applications.

The committee reviewed the draft charter and recommended a few changes. The committee will review the charter again at the next meeting. Discussion occurred around the decision-making process, and the committee agreed to adopt a majority voting process, with an option for a minority report.

Prior to the next meeting, the committee members will identify nominations to fill positions for the Pesticide Application Safety Advisory Workgroup. Committee members will send nominations to the Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs will bring recommendations to the December meeting for the committee's consideration. Based on the committee's discussion, the co-chairs will then draft appointment letters, including the full list of candidates, in English and Spanish.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2019.

Background

In 2019, the Washington State Legislature passed, and the Governor signed in to law, [Substitute Senate Bill 5550](#) establishing the Pesticide Application Safety Committee (PASCO). The committee consists of eleven members, and co-chaired by the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture. Members to serve on the committee include:

- **Lauren Jenks: Committee Co-Chair**, Assistant Secretary, Environmental Public Health Division, Department of Health
- **Ignacio Marquez: Committee Co-Chair**, Regional Assistant to the Director - Eastern/Central WA, Department of Agriculture
- **Senator Rebecca Saldaña**, Senate Democrat Caucus, 37th Legislative District
- **Senator Judy Warnick**, Senate Republican Caucus, 13th Legislative District
- **Representative Tom Dent**, House Republican Caucus, 13th Legislative District
- **Representative Javier Valdez**, House Democrat Caucus, 46th Legislative District
- **David Gang**: Assistant Director, College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences, Washington State University
- **Gwen Hoheisel**: Pesticide Safety Education Coordinator, Washington State University Cooperative Extension
- **Eddie Kasner**, Research Scientist and Outreach Director, University of Washington, Pacific NW Agricultural Safety and Health Center
- **Anne Soiza**, Assistant Director, Department of Labor and Industries
- **Calvin Ohlson-Kiehn**, Assistant Division Manager for Forest Resources, Department of Natural Resources

The PASCO is tasked with developing recommendations for improving the safety of pesticide application. These recommendations will be identified in an annual report to the Legislature through the year 2025.

In addition, the Legislature established an advisory workgroup to assist the PASCO. The advisory workgroup will meet periodically, collect information and make recommendations to the PASCO. Upon direction from the PASCO, any number of topics may be assigned to the advisory workgroup based on their level of expertise, including but not limited to:

- Exploring how state agencies and Washington Poison Center collect and track data;
- Improving pesticide application safety with agricultural applications;

- Leading an effort to establish baseline data for the type and quantity of pesticide applications used in Washington, to be able to compare the number of exposures with overall number of applications;
- Researching ways to improve pesticide application communication among different members of the agricultural community, including educating the public in English and Spanish about acute and chronic health information about pesticides; and
- Working with the industry and agricultural workforce to improve protocols and best practices for use of personal safety equipment for applicators, and reflective gear for the general workforce.

The advisory workgroup consists of the following representatives:

- Washington State Department of Agriculture.
- Employee organizations representing farmworkers (2).
- Farmworkers with expertise on pesticide application (2).
- Community and migrant health centers.
- Growers that use aerial pesticide applications.
- Growers that use fumigation to apply pesticides.
- Growers that use air blast sprayers.
- Aerial applicators.
- A toxicologist.

The advisory workgroup is expected to meet 3-5 times per year, holding most meetings via teleconference, webinar, or videoconference. Member terms will be for no less than 1 year, but could extend up to a maximum of five years, depending on the organization and individual's preference.

This report fulfills the requirement to provide an initial progress report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by January 2020.

Report Out Of Initial Committee Meeting

The committee held its first meeting on October 24, 2019. This meeting focused primarily on the creation and adoption of a charter and shaping the membership of the Advisory Workgroup.

Goals

In its first meeting, the committee discussed the following goals:

- Having one database that holds all pesticide application data.
- Understanding how different agencies gather data, support the industry, and support workers.

- Exploring how new technology can support future decisions and provide real-time information to pesticide applicators.
- Determining if regulatory framework creates silos.
- Reviewing certain pesticides in light of current research and developing recommendations that improve public health and pesticide applications.

Introductions and Discussion

The committee members introduced themselves and discussed their backgrounds along with their hopes and expectations of the committee’s work. Discussion ensued on the following topics:

- Are state agencies such as the Department of Health, Department of Agriculture and Department of Labor and Industries working together?
- Discussed an idea to create a system map for the first meeting in 2020.
- Identifying emerging technology that will help minimize the health impacts from pesticide application.
- How do we ensure that investigations collect data that supports policy decisions that are not too onerous for applicators (business, farmers, government agencies)? How do we combine the various agency’s data into one system for analysis and decision making related to pesticide application safety?
- How can technology progress? Discussed the need to think 20 years from now and consider the differences between our farms.
- How can we provide access and training for new and emerging technologies?
- How can we improve the investigation processes? What are the gaps? The committee plans to define common goals and purposes for investigations and ensure data collection is consistent and reliable.
- How can we achieve precision applications with precision public health?
- Discussed the need to rely on evidence-based public health.
- How does environmental justice fold into this committee’s work?
- The need to balance individual health, industry health, and public health.

Meeting Outcomes

The committee reviewed the draft charter and recommended a few changes. The committee will review the charter again at the next meeting. Discussion occurred around the decision-making process, and the committee agreed to adopt a majority voting process, with an option for a minority report.

Prior to the next meeting, the committee members will identify nominations to fill positions for the Pesticide Application Safety Advisory Workgroup. Committee members will send

nominations to the Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs will bring recommendations to the December meeting for the committee's consideration. Based on the committee's discussion, the co-chairs will then draft appointment letters, including the full list of candidates, in English and Spanish.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2019. Prior to the meeting, members are to review the Pesticide Application Safety Workgroup report from 2018. An email will be sent to the committee members containing a link to the website and the TVW broadcast.

