AN ACT Relating to reducing prenatal exposure and harm to children by limiting environmental exposure to certain pesticides; adding a new section to chapter 17.21 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. (1) The legislature finds that scientific research has played an important role in informing and advancing public policy in many areas, including health, education, early childhood development, and environmental and wildlife protection.

(a) The legislature also finds that organophosphate pesticides, such as chlorpyrifos, at low levels harm aquatic habitats and aquatic organisms, including salmon. Chlorpyrifos affects the feeding habits of young salmon as well as their ability to swim, which impacts the future abundance of salmon.

(b) In addition, the legislature finds that scientific research has identified early childhood as a critical period of intervention during which children develop the foundation for educational achievement. Young children are especially vulnerable to environmental contaminants and toxic stress.

(c) Chlorpyrifos and other organophosphate pesticides affect the nervous system through inhibition of cholinesterase, an enzyme
required for proper nerve functioning. Acute poisoning occurs when nerve impulses pulsate through the body, causing symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, convulsions, respiratory paralysis, and, in extreme cases, death.

(d) There is substantial scientific evidence, including from epidemiological studies, that chlorpyrifos threatens the healthy development of children. Chlorpyrifos is acutely toxic and associated with neurodevelopmental harm in children. Prenatal and early life exposure to chlorpyrifos is associated with elevated risks of reduced IQ, loss of working memory, delays in motor development, attention deficit disorders, and structural changes in the brain.

(e) Children and pregnant women can be exposed to chlorpyrifos through residues on food, contaminated drinking water, and toxic spray drift from nearby pesticide applications. Exposure during pregnancy to even low levels of chlorpyrifos that caused only minimal cholinesterase inhibition (ten percent or less) in mothers can lead to measurable long-lasting and possibly permanent neurobehavioral and functional deficits in prenatally exposed children.

(f) Children experience greater exposure to chlorpyrifos and other pesticides because, relative to adults, they eat, drink, and breathe more in proportion to their body weight. A growing body of evidence shows that prenatal exposure to very low levels of chlorpyrifos can lead to lasting and possibly permanent neurological impairments.

(2) The legislature intends to reduce prenatal exposure and harm to children by restricting the use of chlorpyrifos.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 17.21 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Beginning January 1, 2021, it is unlawful for a person to use a pesticide that contains the active ingredient chlorpyrifos in Washington, except as provided for under subsections (3) and (4) of this section.

(2) The prohibition on the use of chlorpyrifos must remain in effect unless:

(a) The secretary of the department of health determines, in consultation with the department of ecology, by clear and convincing evidence, that specific control measures adopted by the department are sufficient to ensure the application of pesticides containing chlorpyrifos will not:
(i) Result in neurodevelopmental effects or other harmful effects to children from exposure in utero or through direct skin or eye contact, breathing air, consuming food, or drinking water contaminated with chlorpyrifos;

(ii) Negatively impact hospitals, schools, day care centers, and other locations as determined by the department of health; and

(b) The director adopts specific control measures for chlorpyrifos that are designed to reduce emissions sufficiently so the public is not subject to levels of exposure that may cause or contribute to significant adverse health effects.

(3)(a) Until December 31, 2025, the department may grant, upon request by a person who can demonstrate there are no reasonable or cost-effective alternatives, an emergency temporary permit authorizing the use or application of a pesticide containing chlorpyrifos as an active ingredient.

(b) The conditions for an emergency temporary permit must, at a minimum, include:

(i) Prohibiting aerial spraying and the use of the pesticide when the average wind speed is greater than three miles per hour;

(ii) Establishing a buffer zone of at least two hundred fifty feet that extends outward from the perimeter of the application block; and

(iii) Providing notice of the application to the nearby community and pesticide applicators' families at least forty-eight hours in advance of the application that includes:

(A) Targeted outreach in appropriate languages with culturally appropriate materials; and

(B) Information about the adverse health effects that may occur due to childhood and prenatal exposure.

(4) Until the department determines that a reasonable and less toxic alternative is available, the restrictions and requirements provided under subsections (1) and (3) of this section do not apply to the following crops:

(a) Sweet corn;

(b) Mint; and

(c) Onion.

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