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Legislature committee decides against province-wide pesticide ban

VICTORIA/CKNW (AM980)

Sean Leslie | Email news tips to Sean 5/17/2012

A special committee of the legislature has decided against a province-wide ban on the use of cosmetic pesticides.

Committee chair Bill Bennett is calling for further restrictions, but says the science does not support an outright ban.

"I lost my mother to cancer, I lost my father to cancer, I lost my uncle to cancer and my eldest brother has had cancer, so if I thought if I was convinced that we needed to do this, I would definitely have been there, and I know other government members would have been as well. The evidence just simply does not support a recommendation to ban cosmetic pesticides in British Columbia."

But NDP members on the committee disagree.

Environment critic Rob Fleming says a ban is justified and was actually promised by Premier Christy Clark last year.

"Whether they defied the premier or whether she's had a change of opinion and heart on this issue, I don't know, that's for her to answer. But I think the legislature expected more - certainly the people of British Columbia expected much more of their legislators in making recommendations."

Fleming insists there is still a debate in the scientific community over what he calls "causal connections" between pesticides and disease.

Environment minister Terry Lake wants some time to read the committee's report.

Lake says it will be up to cabinet to make the final decision.

"Government considers the report and then decides on action so I can't predict what the government will do with this until we've had an opportunity to read it and discuss it. But recommendations may be followed or there may be a different path. We'll just have to wait and see."

Forty municipalities have their own bans right now, and that won't change.

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