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**CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY
(BC AND YUKON DIVISION)**


Canadian Cancer Society / **Société canadienne du cancer**

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Canadian Cancer Society calls for action on cosmetic pesticide ban to protect public health

VANCOUVER, Oct. 30 /CNW/ - The Canadian Cancer Society B.C. and Yukon (CCSBCY) is calling on the provincial government to accelerate its plans and initiate a defined and timely public consultation on the use of cosmetic chemical pesticides to protect public health and the environment by the end of this year.

"We have waited long enough for the provincial government to act on this public health threat," says Barbara Kaminsky, CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society BC and Yukon. "We are not asking the BC government to lead this initiative. All they need to do is follow in the footsteps of Ontario, Quebec and the Union of BC Municipalities."

In the August 2009 Speech from the Throne, the B.C. government made a commitment to initiate public consultation regarding new statutory protections to safeguard the environment from cosmetic chemical pesticides.

"It is important that the consultations begin as soon as possible and not go on for a long period of time," says Kaminsky. "Most important of all; however, is that the province take strong and immediate action once the consultations have occurred."

Cosmetic pesticides are used to improve the appearance of lawns and gardens by controlling unwanted weeds and plants. They can contain toxic chemicals that are cancer-causing. When pesticides are used in this way, it is referred to as cosmetic (non-essential) use of pesticides.

"Research demonstrates a growing link between pesticides and an increase risk of cancer - particularly in children," says Kaminsky. "There is also overwhelming public support for a ban on the sale of cosmetic chemical pesticides, and that is why we need the BC government to act: it has the authority to restrict the sale of pesticides and protect all British Columbians from exposure to cosmetic chemical pesticides. The time to fight for cancer prevention is now."

More than 20 BC municipalities have adopted bylaws banning cosmetic pesticides, including Kelowna, Victoria, Maple Ridge, Vancouver, Whistler, Courtney, West and North Vancouver. The City of Richmond just adopted its bylaw last week and the recently City of Surrey initiated a special trial.

"The number of B.C. municipalities with bylaws is growing and more are expected to take action in the coming months," says Kaminsky. "However, this is creating a patchwork system of uneven by-laws. A provincial ban would standardize a patchwork of municipal laws."

In addition to calling for provincial action today, the CCS published a list of harmful chemical ingredients common in pesticides at www.cancer/bc.ca and advises consumers to avoid products that have these ingredients.

In the coming weeks, the CCSBCY will begin asking retailers who have not voluntarily agreed to stop selling chemical cosmetic pesticides, to adopt policies to do so.

"With an increasing number of viable, non-toxic alternatives, there is no longer a need to use cosmetic pesticides to enhance the look of lawns and gardens," says Kaminsky. "Pesticide use should only be considered as a last resort to manage pests that may affect our health, safety or food supply, and exposure should be reduced to the lowest possible level."

The Canadian Cancer Society is a national community-based organization of volunteers whose mission is the eradication of cancer and the enhancement of the quality of life of people living with cancer. When you want to know more about cancer, visit our website www.cancer/bc.ca or call our toll-free, bilingual Cancer Information Service at 1 888 939-3333.

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