

## **David Suzuki Foundation Comments on the Government of Ontario's Notice of Intent to Introduce Legislation that Would Ban the Cosmetic Use of Pesticides**

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The David Suzuki Foundation supports a province-wide ban on cosmetic pesticides, with exemptions only to protect public health. The use of pesticides to improve the appearance of lawns, gardens, parks, and schoolyards poses unnecessary risks to human health and the environment.

Dozens of municipalities across Ontario have already passed bylaws to prohibit the cosmetic use of pesticides within their boundaries. A provincially legislated ban can add value by:

- Extending coverage to eliminate cosmetic pesticide use throughout Ontario;
- Prohibiting the *sale* of cosmetic pesticides, as well as their use;
- Introducing a consistent approach to enforcement.

We strongly support including a ban on the sale of cosmetic pesticides in the proposed legislation. While this option is not available to municipalities, the Province regularly exercises its power to regulate sales to achieve policy goals. In this context, banning the cosmetic *use* of pesticides while continuing to allow the retail display and sale of the products in question would send a mixed message and undermine the effectiveness of the policy. It would also make enforcement more difficult.

The Quebec experience clearly indicates the effectiveness of provincial action to restrict both use and sale of cosmetic pesticides. Statistics Canada reports that the number of Quebec households using pesticides decreased by half between 1994 and 2005, dropping from 30 to 15 percent. In Ontario, pesticide use remained constant at 34 percent over the same period (*Households and the Environment*, 2006).

The provincial cosmetic pesticide ban should apply consistently throughout Ontario. Having acknowledged the basis for a precautionary approach to protect human health and the environment, there is no justifiable reason for the Government to overlook rural areas in the application of this policy. Moreover, such fuzzy exemptions will needlessly complicate implementation and enforcement of the legislation.

It is appropriate that the proposed legislation target specifically the cosmetic use of pesticides and the sale of pesticides for cosmetic purposes. We encourage the government to pursue options for reducing agricultural and forestry uses of pesticides through separate initiatives.

The David Suzuki Foundation supports a phased approach to implementing a province-wide ban on cosmetic pesticides, to allow for public education and other transition strategies. We urge the government to pass strong legislation this calendar year and to ensure full implementation before the end of the current mandate.

*The David Suzuki Foundation is a national, non-profit, environmental organization. We use science and education to promote solutions that conserve nature and help achieve sustainability within a generation. Founded in 1990, the Foundation is supported by more than 40 000 members, including 18 000 in Ontario. For more information, please visit our web site at [www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org).*

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