



Halton MPP seeks amendment to pesticide ban

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Through a new private members Bill, Ted Chudleigh is looking to soften the rules around pesticide use in Ontario.

Earlier this month the Halton MPP introduced the Pesticides Amendment Act, which aims to amend the ban on pesticides initiated by the Liberal government. The bill will be debated in the House of Commons Thursday.

Pesticide use for cosmetic reasons (exempting golf courses, the agricultural and forestry industries) in the province was banned on Earth Day 2009 after medical experts, including the Canadian Cancer Society and Ontario College of Family Physicians, lobbied to reduce exposure to pesticides — especially for children who are more susceptible to the potential toxic effects.

However, Chudleigh said if applied properly the chemicals are safe.

"Health Canada has approved all of these pesticides...the problem we have is individuals who sometimes don't know how to mix them in the right proportions and you may apply something that's too strong and it gets washed into our sewers and water."

The veteran politician said banning pesticides risks creating a black market that could pose greater health and environmental risks since it's not monitored.

Chudleigh would like to see the Pesticides Act amended by allowing Ontarians to hire licensed operators to apply pesticides to their lawns and gardens to kill noxious weeds and pests.

"People are fed up with the nanny state. They should be able to use pesticides if they want to spray their grass for ragweed, for example," said Chudleigh, adding that those who don't want to use pesticides have that choice.

However Miltongreen president Jim Steeves said individuals can't control the pesticides that are washed into the water system or blown onto their properties by the wind.

"I'm comfortable with the legislation as it exists," said Steeves, who was part of the Pesticides Alternatives for Milton group and pushed for the Town to ban pesticides for cosmetic reasons.

"An example of why the pesticide ban is working is the animal life. There are a lot more butterflies and bird life, rabbits, and worms. These are all animals that are coming back."

Steeves said there are plenty of organic solutions that could be used to deal with weeds and pests. "I'm sorry if you need pesticides, but it's not good for us. There are neurological concerns with this stuff...why are we exposing our kids to something that's potentially harmful only for cosmetic purposes."

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