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## Qualicum Beach moving to ban cosmetic pesticide use

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Nancy Falconer, of the Canadian Cancer Society, spoke in support of a proposed pesticide-use bylaw at Qualicum Beach council Monday.

The bylaw would ban non-essential or cosmetic use of pesticides (now a generic term referring also to herbicides, insecticides and so on) used to improve the appearance of lawns and gardens by controlling unwanted weeds and plants.

"Research demonstrates a growing link between pesticides and an increase risk of cancer, particularly in children," says Falconer. "Qualicum Beach has participated in a regional education campaign and now is the time for the next step, which is a bylaw."

A 2008 Ipsos Reid Poll commissioned by the Society showed that nearly three-quarters of residents from Qualicum Beach and Parksville support a ban.

More than 30 BC municipalities have adopted bylaws banning the cosmetic use of pesticides, including Nanaimo, Saanich, Victoria, Esquimalt, Courtenay, Comox, Cumberland, Port Alberni and Tofino on Vancouver Island.

The province of BC has been considering province-wide regulations, but to date has not taken any action.

"With an increasing number of viable, non-toxic alternatives, there is no longer a need to use pesticides to enhance the look of lawns and gardens," says Falconer.

"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."

Coun. Kent Becker said public education "is really paramount," including education of merchants that they can make money selling alternatives to pesticides.

Coun. Jack Wilson called a pesticide ban proposed for the Town "paternalistic" in that it suggests local residents are "too stupid" to read the labels and use the products correctly.

Coun. Mary Brouillette said she agrees the proposed ban is "a little Big Brotherish."

Mayor Teunis Westbroek said that whatever is put into the land or the air ends up in all living things.

"It's not just what people put on their properties but it affects everyone," he said.

Council later gave second reading to the pesticide-use bylaw, which is modeled on the one in place in Courtenay.

For more information on the subject from the Canadian Cancer Society, visit [www.cancer/bc.ca](http://www.cancer/bc.ca) or call toll-free 1-888-939-3333.

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