



NSBIA weighs in on cosmetic pesticide debate

By: Andrea Klassen in Environment, Health, News July 9, 2015 1 Comment 63 Views

With less than a week before council revisits the issue, Kamloops' North Shore Business Improvement Association (NSBIA) is raising red flags about a proposed ban on the use of cosmetic pesticides.

NSBIA general manager Steven Puhallo said members of the association's board are concerned a ban will lead to lost jobs and closed businesses.

Council is set to address the issue on Tuesday after tabling it in late May to allow members of the community to weigh in.

Coun. Tina Lange proposed the ban on behalf of the city's urban agriculture committee.

The ban would apply to ornamental plants, including shrubs, flowers and lawns, on residential properties, but not vegetable gardens or fruit trees.

Puhallo said the NSBIA does have some lawn-care companies in its membership, but has also been talking to other businesses throughout Kamloops who are alarmed by the proposed ban.

His organization's concerns are similar to those raised by lawn care companies that have spoken at council meetings — that, because cosmetic pesticides will still be available on store shelves, residents who want weed-free lawns will take matters into their own hands rather than calling professionals for applications.

"It takes the ability of the regulated and trained professionals to make money that way, and that can be more harmful than the current standard," Puhallo said.

Under the city's existing bylaws, residents can apply pesticides to lawns, but must have a licensed applicator do so and must post signage alerting others the products have been used.

Puhallo called that a better approach.

"This is something that both myself and our board of directors had a lot of concerns about," he said.

"As a society, we've come to accept that there has to be a balance between environmental concerns and commercial priorities. The current bylaw, as it stands, we believe allows for a balance between these two."

Puhallo also questioned how the bylaw would be enforced.

In an earlier interview, bylaw services supervisor John Ramsay told *KTW* that bylaw officers have mostly focused on ensuring signage is posted correctly under current bylaws — 24 hours before application and for 48 hours afterward — rather than cases where someone has sprayed the products on their own.

"For us to get involved, it tends to be after the fact when someone's already sprayed, and for us to determine whether or not it was pesticide use is very hard," he said.

"I do recall I've talked to a couple people about it, but it's not one of the big ones that we manage."

The city doesn't receive many complaints about its current ban — Ramsay said his recollection is fewer than five per year.

He wasn't aware of any tickets given out for violating the existing bylaw.

"Usually we talk about compliance and things like that," Ramsay said.

This isn't the first time the pesticide debate has come to council.

Last term, Coun. Donovan Cavers proposed a similar ban, which failed on a 5-4 vote.