

City ignores pesticide science

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Re: "Council declines pesticide ban," The Journal, Feb. 7.

The lack of foresight by city council with respect to the bylaw to ban cosmetic use of pesticides has resulted in a decision to do nothing.

The council members readily admitted at the meeting Monday that they are not scientists, but when faced with current scientific evidence of the effects of pesticides on human and environmental health, they chose to ignore it and go with the status quo.

The argument is that these compounds are legal and approved by Environment Canada.

As someone who has been involved with changing environmental regulations for 20 years, I know that changing those guidelines takes an incredibly long time, usually more than 10 years from the time they are first demonstrated as harmful.

History has shown that adverse effects of "legal" chemicals such as bisphenol A, PCBs and trichloroethylene were documented for many many years prior to their eventual removal from the marketplace.

We should be doing as much as possible to reduce our exposure to herbicides and pesticides with known adverse biological effects.

In a motion presented to council by a group I was part of, we were not calling for a total ban on pesticides, just a restriction on the use for cosmetic purposes.

We acknowledge that professional application for protection of human health and food supplies is justified.

There are proven alternatives that work, and this is found in the hundreds of municipalities in North America that have these bans to protect their citizens.

In the absence of leadership by city council members who obfuscated the real issues on this important topic, I urge all Edmontonians to reduce or eliminate their personal use of pesticides and herbicides.

And I urge you to support us when this issue comes to council again in 2014.

As for the next election, some councillors' lack of leadership and cavalier attitude shown toward reducing risk should be so judged.

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