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## Cancer society not part of pesticide ban coalition in Manitoba

[No Comments](#) Posted Oct. 18th, 2012 by [Robert Arnason](#)

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The Canadian Cancer Society has a clear position when it comes to cosmetic pesticides: it wants a ban on the use and sale of pesticides for lawns, gardens, parks and other green spaces.

However, the organization's Manitoba chapter isn't part of a provincial coalition supporting a proposed ban on cosmetic pesticides in Manitoba.

"Although the Canadian Cancer Society supports it on their website, the Manitoba branch is reluctant to sign on," said Amanda Kinden, a member of Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Manitoba, a group of individuals and organizations lobbying the province for a ban.



Jason Permanand, communications manager for the cancer society's Manitoba chapter, said the organization's lack of participation in the pesticide ban lobby effort doesn't mean it opposes the ban.

"It isn't fair to say the Canadian Cancer Society doesn't believe in the coalition," he said.

"I just don't know exactly what the coalition says about the issue in order to say it's something we would support or not."

Permanand said the society doesn't have a blanket position on pesticides. It evaluates the overall impact of pesticides on human health, including factors such as food security, safety and the environment. Based on those evaluations, the society does support cosmetic pesticide bans.

"The risks and benefits of pesticides, basically, should be assessed on each situation," he said.

"For the cosmetic pesticides, there are really no health benefits, whatsoever."

However, the society has a different position on agricultural pesticides.

"Agriculture is definitely something where we believe that they should be part of a plan to control pests," Permanand said.

Kinden said the cancer society's response to the proposed ban was unsatisfactory.

"We were a little disappointed by organizational response, like the health care industry," she said.

"Their whole mandate (the cancer society) supports what we're aiming for, but they were still reluctant to sign on."

Kinden said she was particularly disappointed with Manitoba's doctors. She was hoping more physicians would back the ban.

"Mostly, they were just reluctant about supporting it."

The Manitoba government initiated a public consultation process this summer in which individuals and groups were invited to submit opinions on a cosmetic pesticide ban.

Farm lobby groups in the province, including Keystone Agricultural Producers and the Manitoba Canola Growers Association (MCGA), oppose the ban because they believe it will increase the spread of weeds from urban green spaces to cropland.

"(As well), the stigmatization of urban pesticides will lead to the stigmatization of all pesticides," the MCGA's submission said

In late September, Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Manitoba held a news conference at which it delivered a letter to conservation minister Gord Mackintosh calling on the government to enact a cosmetic pesticide ban.

About 1,200 people signed the petition and another 250 people signed letters to the government, Kinden said.

“We’re very happy, (but) obviously we feel there are many more people who support a ban.”

KAP president Doug Chorney said he was surprised when Mackintosh suggested during the news conference that the ban was a done deal, even before the province had reviewed the submissions and studied the impact of bans in other jurisdictions.

“We would like the minister to let science decide the future, not political activism,” Chorney said.

“If 1,200 people sign a petition saying we shouldn’t vaccinate our children, does that mean government will ignore all the good science that says vaccination improves public safety?”

The consultation period ended Oct. 1, and the province says it will now review the submissions and craft legislation on the issue over the next couple of months. If it proceeds as expected, the government would likely introduce the cosmetic pesticide ban in the 2013 spring session of the legislature.

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