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The Coalition for a Healthy Ottawa

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News:

June 16, 2008

Health and environment groups sound alarm about Ontario pesticide Bill 64



TORONTO, [June 16 /CNW/](#) - Environmental and health-care leaders are calling on the McGuinty government to act on flaws in the province's pesticide legislation to better protect the health of Ontarians.

Bill 64 will ban the use and sale of pesticides for cosmetic purposes. However, as the bill winds its way through committee hearings and reading in the legislature, a group of more than a dozen prominent health-care and environmental organizations says the government must act on the bill's weaknesses. Unless it's amended, Bill 64 will strip municipalities' of their rights to protect their citizens through their own pesticide bylaws, and would nullify any existing bylaws.

"It is essential that the province not take away the municipal power to pass bylaws dealing with lawn and garden pesticide use," says Kathleen Cooper, Senior Researcher at the Canadian Environmental Law Association. "Thousands of Ontario citizens have worked closely with their municipalities to reduce unnecessary pesticide use."

"Pesticide use represents a real threat to all of our health, and the health of children in particular," says Jan Kasperski, Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario College of Family Physicians. "Municipalities must retain the power to protect their citizens' health by passing bylaws that are tougher than the provincial legislation."

Doris Grinspun, Executive Director of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, says the bill needs to be a floor that will set a base on which other bylaws can build, not a ceiling that prevents further protections from being enacted. She says nurses are also gravely worried about a loophole that would allow future governments to introduce exemptions to the ban.

"Nurses worked in good faith with the McGuinty government, believing that the government would produce the strongest possible protection for the public," she says. "But these shortfalls are unnecessary and undermine public protection from the devastating effects of pesticides. We urge Premier McGuinty to reconsider his government's position."

Gideon Forman, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, agrees that there are significant concerns with Bill 64. "While doctors applaud the proposal to ban the sale of 300 pesticide products, we're disappointed the new Act stops municipalities from passing stronger pesticide legislation. We're also concerned that any exemptions could permit the very cosmetic pesticides this law is supposed to prohibit."

For further information: Jill Scarrow, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, Ph: (416) 408-5604, E-mail: jscarrow@nao.org; Jan Kasperski, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario College of Family Physicians, Ph: (416) 867-9646 ext. 27, Email: jk_ocfp@cfpc.ca; Kathleen Cooper, Senior Researcher, Canadian Environmental Law Association, Ph: (705) 324-1608 or cell (705) 341-2488, E-mail: kcooper@cela.ca; Gideon Forman, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Ph: (416) 306-2273 or (647) 886-2189 (cell), E-mail: Gideon@cape.ca



May 28, 2008

Ottawa City Council endorses provincial initiative to ban the use and sale of cosmetic pesticides

With a 17-7 vote, Ottawa City Council has overwhelmingly endorsed the McGuinty Government's initiative to ban the use and sale of cosmetic pesticides throughout Ontario ([Bill 64 – The Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Act](#)). At the same time Ottawa Council urged McGuinty to amend Bill 64 to permit municipalities to pass bylaws regulating cosmetic pesticide use consistent with the intent of the provincial legislation. With this Ottawa joins the City of Toronto and other Ontario municipalities requesting similar amendments. Currently Bill 64 is proposing to preempt municipal pesticide bans. Councilor Alex Cullen stated that:

"No municipality should be stopped from trying to protect its citizens from these known health hazards, and the McGuinty Government should heed this call coming from Toronto, Ottawa and other municipalities."

The following members of Ottawa City Council failed to support the endorsement -- Rob Jellett, Steve Desroches, Eli El-Chantiry, Jan Harder, Doug Thompson, Bob Monette, Gord Hunter.

For a background on how municipal pesticide by-laws are threatened by the flawed provincial bill please [click here](#).



May 4, 2008

Municipal Pesticide By-Laws Threatened by Flawed Provincial Bill 64 - "The Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Act, 2008"

According to [Samuel Trosow](#), Associate Professor of law at the University of Western Ontario, the 32 municipal pesticide [by-laws](#) in Ontario may be threatened by the Ontario Government's new province-wide pesticide ban, [Bill 64](#), that while well intentioned, is fundamentally flawed as it is drafted.

Section 7.1 (5) of the Bill states:

"A municipal by-law is inoperative if it addresses the use, sale, offer for sale or transfer of a pesticide that may be used for a cosmetic purpose."

This express preemption of local by-laws is not necessary. Municipal by-laws can co-exist with provincial measure so long as there are no direct conflicts, and there is clear law defining what constitutes such a conflict. It's important to have a local by-law on the books even if there is a similar ban because the city is in a much better position to be conducting enforcement and education about the by-law.

Furthermore, Bill 64's open-ended exemption for "other prescribed uses" of pesticides is gaping loophole and should be closed.

To read Samuel Trosow article, please click [here](#).

Please visit our [Action Alert](#) page which details what you can do to tell the Ontario Government that municipal bylaws should not be preempted, but rather built upon, as is done in Quebec.



April 22, 2008

Province of Ontario to ban cosmetic use and sale of pesticides

The Ontario Government introduced legislation today (Earth Day) that will implement a province-wide ban on the cosmetic use and sale of lawn and garden pesticides. The ban would likely take effect next spring.

Environment Minister John Gerretsen commented about the proposed legislation that:

"We always said it was a priority when we came out with our platform last year, and it's had tremendous support around the province from what we've received as far as the environmental registry is concerned. Ninety per cent of the people that responded to it responded in a favourable way."

NDP Environmental critic Peter Tabuns stated:

"Cities have been doing this. There have been links between the use of herbicides (and) pesticides and human disease. Why don't we phase out the stuff that's unnecessary?"

If they bring forward legislation that has teeth in it, that's useful, then obviously we're going to be inclined to support it."

The Ontario College of Family Physicians has said the long-term effects of exposure to pesticides can be devastating, especially to pregnant women and children, leading to

learning disabilities, birth defects and abortions.

The legislation would also echo Massachusetts law requiring pesticide manufacturers to reduce the toxins they use in production.

CHO welcomes strong province-wide legislation that would ban the sale and use of cosmetic pesticides throughout Ontario.

For the Ontario Government Press Release, please click [here](#)

For the CTV News video, please click: [here](#).

For news stories, please click: [Toronto Star](#) , [Globe and Mail](#), [Toronto Sun](#), [CBC](#), [CTV Ottawa Citizen](#), [CITY TV](#), and [680 News](#).



April 15, 2008

List of Pesticide Bylaws Grows in Ontario: Cornwall & Stratford added

On Monday, April 14, 2008, two more Ontario municipalities added their names to the growing list of pesticide bylaws across Canada. They were [Stratford](#) by a vote of 10-1 in favor and [Cornwall](#) by a vote of 6-5 in favor.

The Cornwall Standard Freeholder reported that:

Cornwall Councillor Elaine MacDonald said when she dies, she doesn't want her tombstone to read: "She ignored her planet, but she had a mighty nice lawn."

Councillor MacDonald stated that she didn't run for council to let another level of government handle issues which are of importance to her.



April 9, 2008

City of Ottawa offering pesticide-free lawn and garden care seminars

The City is once again holding seminars this year. The programme schedule can be viewed [here](#).



April 3, 2008

Majority of British Columbia and Saskatchewan residents want province-wide lawn and garden pesticide bans.

Ipsos Reid polling conducted for the Canadian Cancer Society has established that a

clear majority of residents in British Columbia and Saskatchewan want province-wide pesticide bans against the cosmetic use. For further details, please see our [opinion poll webpage](#).



March 31, 2008

New poll shows B.C. wants ban on cosmetic pesticides

A majority of British Columbia residents support a call by the Canadian Cancer Society for new provincial legislation that would restrict the sale and use of cosmetic (non-essential) pesticides, according to an Ipsos Reid poll conducted for the society's B.C. and Yukon division. On April 3, the Canadian Cancer Society will release these poll results at a breakfast in Victoria, B.C., and ask the MLAs to pass legislation that would reduce the environmental and health impacts of cosmetic pesticides.

Source: Jerilynn Kiely, Canadian Cancer Society, Interior Region, Kelowna.



March 24, 2008

Pesticide experts demand better assessment of pesticides in Canada

In the March 24th issue of the Globe and Mail, prominent pesticide researchers who previously asserted that pesticides do not definitively cause harm (as opposed to pesticides definitely not causing harm) are now calling for more comprehensive assessment of risks.

Evidently, Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) does not consider thousands of studies investigating the health effects of pesticides. Furthermore, the PMRA has no epidemiologist or medical doctor on staff. The newspaper article finds that the PMRA is ill-equipped to assess human studies. Of great concern is that the PMRA is largely dependent upon studies from pesticide manufacturers, as the PMRA does not even have have labs of its own.

The article concludes that Ontario's proposed province-wide synthetic lawn pesticide ban is necessary:

Ontario's legislation would fill gaps left by the federal government. It would recognize that for landscaping, where many vulnerable people are exposed, the risks highlighted by the medical community outweigh the benefits.

To read the full article, click [here](#). (source: Globe and Mail, "Low-risk landscaping: It's time to turf the toxins" March 24, 2008)



January 18, 2008

Ontario Government To Consult On Banning The Cosmetic Use Of Pesticides

Environment Minister John Gerretsen said today that "there is growing concern about the potential harmful effects of these products on human health and the environment, and growing concern among medical professionals and ordinary Ontarians demanding action... we said we would ban the use of these products for cosmetic purposes and we're keeping that promise."

The first stage of consultations with Ontarians on how to shape legislation banning the cosmetic use of pesticides will invite the public to provide initial comments.

The public is invited to comment online to the Environment Ministry. Show your support for a province-wide pesticide ban by clicking [here](#).

Also, A *Notice of Proposal* has been posted to the Environmental Registry. The registry is at www.ebr.gov.on.ca and the registry number is 010-2248.

The Ministry of the Environment's press release is located [here](#).



January 16, 2008

McGuinty government to move shortly on pesticides ban

According to a story in the London Free Press today, the Ontario government "will move shortly on an election promise to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides." Premier McGuinty was quoted saying:

"We're looking forward to introducing that (law) in our spring session."

On January 15, 2008, a Coalition of Ontario's top health and environment organizations called up the McGuinty government to enact strong legislation banning the use and sale of "cosmetic" pesticides. The coalition released a five-point statement outlining what it would like to see in the new legislation. The statement is endorsed by 15 organizations including the Canadian Cancer Society (Ontario Division), Canadian Environmental Law Association, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario ([CHEO](#)), David Suzuki Foundation, Ontario College of Family Physicians, Ontario Medical Association (Section on Pediatrics), and the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario.

Links: [Coalition of 15 organizations support a province wide ban - media release](#)

[Groups that support a province-wide pesticide ban](#)

CTV news: [Coalition wants Ontario to pass pesticide ban](#) and [video clip](#)

London Free Press: [Ontario pesticide ban in works](#)



2007 Year in review:

Ottawa lags while more municipalities lead with pesticide bylaws

As of December 31, 2007, there are 137 pesticide by-laws across Canada, with Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton and Vancouver leading the way. There are over 13.8 million

Canadians, or 43.9% of Canada's total population (based on the 2006 Census), benefiting from enhanced protection from unwanted exposure to synthetic lawn and garden pesticides. There are twenty-nine (29) Ontario municipalities that have adopted private property pesticide bylaws while Ottawa has yet to do so. Ottawa's image as a community health prevention leader has totally tanked on this specific issue.

Those from outside of Ottawa seem to agree that Ottawa City Council is certainly not leading the pack on pesticides. Halifax Councillor, Bob Harvey offered the following comment in a CBC interview with Rita Celli on October 27, 2005 about Ottawa's failed attempt to adopt a pesticide by-law:

"Well I was surprised and dismayed by that I didn't realize until today. I'd assume that five years after we went through this debate and discussion that, you know, enlightenment would have spread to the nation's capital."

A headline in *The News EMC (Ottawa West)* on September 27, 2007 read:

'Suzuki lambastes Ottawa on pesticides. Says mayor 'so ignorant he doesn't know he's ignorant'.

The headline referred to the fact that Ottawa City Council has yet to follow in the footsteps of more than 100 other Canadian municipalities that have banned cosmetic pesticide use and David Suzuki's response, having met with Mr. O'Brien to discuss this issue, to an audience of over 1000 attending the Canadian Public Health Association annual conference in Ottawa.

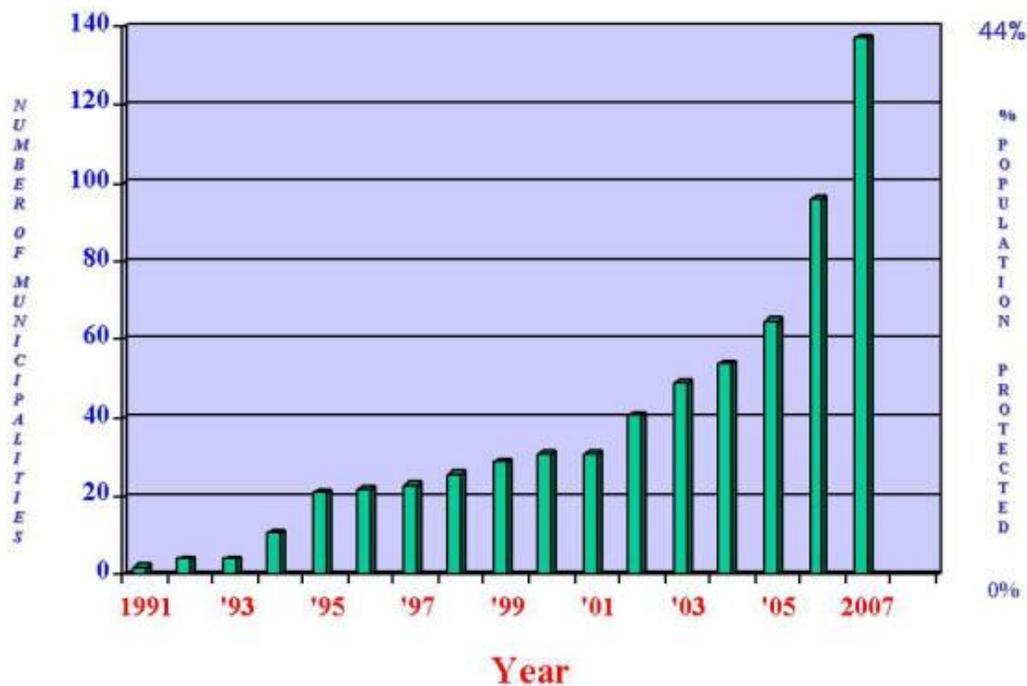
Dr. Robin Walker, former Medical Director of Critical Care at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario had this to say about Ottawa's fumbling on pesticides:

"City Council accepted industry propaganda over medical science and once again abrogated their responsibility to protect the health of all the citizens of Ottawa. The majority of our City Council today chose political expediency over what is right for the community, and put lawns at the top of their priorities and kids at the bottom."

Read press release [here](#)

The following chart summarizes the rapid increase in the number of municipal pesticide bylaws across Canada (click on chart for full size image):

Canadian Municipal Pesticide Bylaws



Archives: [2007 News](#)

Web CHO

CHO Homepage

To contact CHO, please E-mail: [healthyottawa at hotmail dot com](mailto:healthyottawa@hotmail.com)

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