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QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Should helmets be mandatory for skateboarders?

- Yes and strictly enforced
- Education would work better
- It's pointless even trying

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Ban on pesticides would be a winner

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JULY 30, 2011

BY DR. WARREN BELL
PAST FOUNDING DIRECTOR
CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Premier Christy Clark and Opposition Leader Adrian Dix are to be commended for supporting a province-wide ban on the sale and use of lawn and garden pesticides.

Not only will this legislation be hugely popular, it will also have a very positive effect on the health of B.C.'s people, environment, and economy.

How can we be sure? Because we've seen what happens when pesticide regulations are passed in other provinces.

The first result, not surprisingly, is a very low pesticide usage rate. Quebec's pesticide ban started to take effect in April, 2003. By 2007, chemical pesticides were being used by just four per cent of households with a lawn or garden. By contrast, in B.C. — which lacks a province-wide ban — the figure was 25 per cent.

The Ontario College of Family Physicians tells us pesticides are associated with brain cancer, prostate cancer, kidney cancer, and pancreatic cancer. The College makes a point of saying some children exposed to pesticides have an increased risk of leukemia, especially if they come into contact with "insecticides and herbicides used on lawns, fruit trees and gardens..."

When Ontario's pesticide ban came into effect in April, 2009, the province removed more than 250 of these toxic products from the market.

The Ontario ban is also improving water quality. The provincial Ministry of Environment studied pesticide concentrations in 10 urban streams before and after their ban came into effect (2008 vs. 2009) and compared the findings.

The study's author states: "Concentrations of 2,4-D, dicamba, MCPP, total phenoxy herbicides and total insecticides were significantly lower in 2009..."

In fact, in some streams pesticide concentrations were up to 97 per cent lower. That's an extraordinary result and suggests a province-wide pesticide ban in B.C. would have similar benefits for local waterways.

The Ontario ban has also been well-received by lawn care businesses. The firm Environmental Factor — which makes a non-toxic corn-gluten-based weed inhibitor -- had a 400 per cent increase in sales and manufacturing in the ban's first six months. Product demand was so great the company had to move to larger premises.

Other Ontario firms said they viewed the new legislation as an opportunity for business growth and new hiring. (Organic lawn care, which includes hand-weeding, is more labour-intensive.)

And business expansion also occurred when pesticides were banned by municipalities. For example, in the five years following passage of a pesticide bylaw in Halifax, the number of landscaping and lawn care businesses in that city grew by 53 per cent, according to Statistics Canada.

Finally, this legislation is a winner with the public. Polling done in the B.C. by Innovative Research Group and released in February, 2011 found support for a phase-out of "cosmetic" or non-essential pesticides was over 70 per cent.

Perhaps most significantly, the study found support for the phase-out does not differ between rural and urban areas. The message for government couldn't be clearer: No matter where they live in the province, the vast majority of British Columbians want an end to toxic lawn products.

Good for human health, beneficial to the environment, a boost to business: these are some of the reasons our most respected health organizations — including the Canadian Cancer Society, the Learning Disabilities Association, the Lung Association, and the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation — support a province-wide prohibition on non-essential pesticides.

We would urge British Columbians to e-mail the Premier (premier@gov.bc.ca) today with one simple message: This summer give us the protection from pesticides already enjoyed by millions of other Canadians.

Dr. Warren Bell is Past Founding President of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (www.capec.ca). His co-author, Gideon Forman, is executive director of the organization.

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 **whg** 2 days ago

LETTER TO THE EDITOR. THE DAILY NEWS. KAMLOOPS, BRITISH COLUMBIA. RESPONSE TO WARREN BELL CONCERNING WATER QUALITY. JULY 30th, 2011.

Warren Bell is WRONG !

The PROHIBITION of pest control products in the Province of Ontario DID NOT improve water quality.

ALMOST UNDETECTABLE LEVELS of pest control products were detected in Ontario streams EVEN BEFORE PROHIBITION.

Non-Expert Warren Bell alleges that the PROHIBITION of pest control products in the Urban Landscape somehow leads to lower concentrations of herbicide in stream water. [Wrong !]

This allegation is FALSE, MISLEADING, and CONTRADICTS OVER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF RESEARCH.

It is common knowledge within the LEGITIMATE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY that pest control products and fertilizers used for the maintenance of turfgrass areas ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS SERIOUS CONTAMINANTS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

Researchers have shown that A HEALTHY, DENSE, AND PROPERLY-MAINTAINED TURFGRASS COVER will help RETAIN pest control products and fertilizers, acting like a GIANT SPONGE.

The leaves, the thatch, and the roots, as well as the soil medium, all interact to intercept most pest control product and fertilizer inputs.

The overall fate of pest control products and fertilizers used in the turfgrass environment has been estimated in DOZENS OF RESEARCH REPORTS examining RUN-OFF and LEACHING.

Here are some examples of the scientific conclusions from these reports —

- A healthy, dense, and properly-maintained turf cover significantly REDUCES the potential for run-off losses of pest control products and fertilizers
- Losses to surface run-off of pest control products and fertilizers applied to turfgrass DOES NOT APPEAR TO POSE A SIGNIFICANT HAZARD
- Natural precipitation events DOES NOT produce detectable run-off
- Pest control products DO NOT move in water, either off-site with run-off or down through the soil profile

- Even under highly exaggerated storm conditions, NO MORE THAN 5 PER CENT of the water ever runs-off from the turfgrass environment
- When turf is mature, healthy, dense, and properly-maintained, surface movement of water, nutrients, or pest control products is VERY LIMITED, regardless of concentration
- In the worst case events, transport is limited to LESS THAN 2 PER CENT of pest control products and less than 5 per cent of fertilizers
- Healthy, dense, and properly-maintained turf cover allows LESS THAN 1 PER CENT of the nitrogen fertilizer applied to leach to a root-zone depth of four feet
- Dietary risks with pest control products like 2,4-D from water and food are NOT OF CONCERN — NO ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS ARE EXPECTED from these products

Moreover, the mere ability to measure or detect the presence of a pest control product or fertilizer ingredient in the environment is NOT an indication that the substance poses any health risk, especially at the trace levels at which we can now detect them, which is in parts per trillion.

Furthermore, most pest control products used in the Urban Landscape have a SHORT HALF-LIFE in the environment — for example, 2,4-Herbicide has a relatively short half-life in water of 1 to 2 weeks.

Even at ALMOST UNDETECTABLE LEVELS, pest control products are SHORT-LIVED.

Pest control products are ACCEPTABLE FOR CONTINUED USE IN CANADA because ...

- Pest control products are APPROVED for use by Health Canada
- Health-Canada-Approved pest control products MEET STRICT HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS
- Pest control products are SCIENTIFICALLY SAFE
- Health-Canada-Approved pest control products provide a reasonable certainty that NO HARM will occur from their use
- Overall, when they are used properly, there are NO harmful irreversible effects to health and the environment

The PROHIBITION of pest control products in the Urban Landscape will NOT improve the water quality of our streams and rivers.

It is a MYTH to believe that ANY PROHIBITION does NOT protect the environment.

For more information, please go to the Pesticide Truths web site.

<http://pesticidetruths.com/>

&

<http://uncleadolph.blogspot.co...>

William H. Gathercole and Norah G
National Organization Responding Against HUJE that seek to harm the Green Space
Industry (NORAHG)
Montreal, Quebec

Like Reply



whg 1 week ago

LETTER TO THE EDITOR. THE DAILY NEWS. KAMLOOPS, BRITISH COLUMBIA.
RESPONSE TO WARREN BELL. JULY 30th, 2011.

Ontario College of Family Physicians (OCFP) concocted a disgraceful, false, misleading,

biased, and subversive bogus LITERATURE REVIEW of pest control products — this review has been DEBUNKED !

This review has absolutely NO CREDIBILITY in the legitimate scientific community, and has been REFUTED and DISCREDITED.

Internationally, this review has been viewed as • inadequately addressing the issues • inconsistent • over–interpreting studies • superficial in its approach • unclear • weak quality.

This review has absolutely NO CREDIBILITY since none of its authors and reviewers has ANY recognized expertise, training or background in matters concerning pest control products

Among the authors and reviewers of the OCFP–review, there are doctors who were found guilty of professional mis–conduct over sexual activities, doctors whose license was suspended, and doctors who deny having reviewed the document.

The BOGUS–OCFP–Review has been used a PRETEXT for the NEEDLESS, SENSELESS, and MALICIOUS PROHIBITION of pest control products.

Moreover, thanks to the AGREEMENT reached between Dow AgroSciences and the Canadian federal government of May 25th, 2011, it was concluded that ...

- Pest control products are SCIENTIFICALLY SAFE
- PROHIBITIONS are IRREFUTABLY INVALIDATED

Sadly, in those jurisdictions where PROHIBITION has been legislated, EXTENSIVE CARNAGE has been INFLICTED on Professional Lawn Care companies, in the form of HORRIFIC FINES and BUSINESS FAILURES.

PROHIBITIONS are NOT NECESSARY since pest control products are HEALTH–CANADA–APPROVED, FEDERALLY–LEGAL, and SCIENTIFICALLY–SAFE.

For more information, please go to the Pesticide Truths web site.

<http://pesticidetruths.com/>

&

<http://uncleadolph.blogspot.co...>

William H. Gathercole and Norah G
National Organization Responding Against HUJE that seek to harm the Green Space Industry (NORAHG)
Montreal, Quebec

2 people liked this.



Farm2 1 week ago

I remember hearing a CBC interview years ago with a representative of a manufacturer of a product marketed as a skin softener that apparently also had insect repellent properties.

So, parents could lather their kids with a benign skin care lotion to keep them protected from insect bites. Much better than using one of those products registered as an insect repellent and labelled as an 'insecticide' with all kinds of warnings, right? Perhaps not.

When the representative was asked why the product was not marketed as an insect repellent, the response was that they would have to do millions of dollars of research and go through a bureaucratic registration process. Anyone that knows anything about the federal pesticide registration system would know that much of the research required for registration is toxicological studies to prove that the product does not cause cancer and is not associated with other health and environmental problems. So, it would appear to me that the products marketed as "pesticides" may actually be safer than many of the other products we all use in our day-to-day lives.

5 people liked this.



EnviroEd 1 week ago

"The College" is a group of environmental activists. A few of it's members are medical doctors. They have no expertise in pesticide toxicology. Dr. Bell's comments are inaccurate, misleading and out and out lies! Shame on you Dr. Bell.

5 people liked this.



Dorite 1 week ago in reply to EnviroEd

EnviroEd - I agree.

The Federal Gov't is responsible for testing, evaluating, approving, registering, monitoring, and reviewing pesticide control products. It is a public multi-agency function with Health Canada being the lead agency, with a focus on safety. The same agency that regulates prescription drugs.

The BC Gov't regulates the use of pesticides in a safe manner. Of course, we should exercise care and respect in use of pesticides, but I believe Dr. Bell is fear-mongering. We have enough government control and regulation.

4 people liked this.



waltertrkla 6 days ago in reply to Dorite

As a person who has used pesticides for some 30 years (powerful chemicals like Guthion, Imidan) I had to pass stringent exams to handle all chemical products including the two mentioned. I had to pass a test with 80% plus score in order to get a license to apply the chemical. I had to warn my neighbors who had gardens next to our family orchard that I was applying pesticide products. They usually covered or washed the garden after I had finished spraying. Before the awareness and testing requirement my father-in-law and brother-in-law applied these products without masks, and gloves. Both developed asthma and lung problems. The products had to be stored in a well ventilated out building and those applying the material had to have masks and body cover so that the anatomy of the applicator was not exposed.

There is a need to ban willy-nilly cosmetic type of application of pesticides. We know that exposure occurs through numerous pathways, including the skin, eyes, ears, nose and mouth — all areas where children are particularly sensitive. Canadian Cancer Society is a major opponent of cosmetic pesticide application.

There are many scientific studies like the American National Academy of Sciences which estimates that one in 7 adults suffers acute symptoms of pesticide poisoning. "A University of Southern California study showed that children whose parents used garden pesticides were 6.5 times more likely to develop leukemia. According to EPA's Guidelines for Carcinogen Risk Assessment, children receive 50 percent of their lifetime cancer risks in the first two years of life. Children with brain cancer are more likely to have been exposed to insecticides in the home. Children in families that use professional pest control services are at higher risk of developing leukemia than children in families that don't use pesticides. Other academic research "demonstrates that pesticide poisoning can lead to poor performance on tests including intellectual functioning, academic skills, abstraction, flexibility of thought, and motor skills; memory disturbances and inability to focus attention; deficits in intelligence, reaction time, and manual dexterity; and reduced perceptual speed. Increased anxiety and emotional problems have also been reported."

"In 2009, an "inert" ingredient in the most common lawn pesticide product known as Roundup was found to kill human cells. The French government sued the manufacturer of Roundup for making improper safety claims about Roundup. Numerous researchers have concluded that Roundup can cause infertility in mammals, including humans."

These are only some examples where those who rely on science tell us the danger of pesticides. The provincial government of several Eastern Provinces have banned cosmetic pesticides and rightly so.

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