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THE TRI-CITY NEWS

Ban pesticides, says local enviro group

By Gary McKenna - The Tri-City News

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A Tri-City group calling for the ban of all cosmetic pesticides is encouraging its supporters to participate in a 60-day province-wide consultation process.

The Coquitlam Pesticide Awareness Coalition (CPAC) points to research indicating that garden chemicals cause cancer and are harmful to the environment. Submission for the online input process, which ends Feb. 15, will be used by the provincial government in assessing the necessity of further pesticide restrictions.

"This is a great opportunity to voice your opinion about how you feel about the dangers of cosmetic pesticides," said CPAC spokesperson Jane Thomsing. "We want to keep Coquitlam residents informed of why it is important... to have a ban."

Thomsing points to research outlining the effects pesticides have on the environment and human health. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, there is evidence linking garden chemicals to the cause of a variety of cancers and Thomsing said local watersheds are also affected by the products.

CPAC formed last spring after Coquitlam council decided not to hold its own public input session to discuss a ban on cosmetic pesticides. Coun. Selina Robinson put the motion forward, but it was defeated following a tie vote.

"We became extremely alarmed that Coquitlam residents weren't even given the right to have a public input process," Thomsing said. "To vote against having a conversation is shameful."

Several councillors and Mayor Richard Stewart argued that a municipal ban would not be effective and that the province should regulate the use and sale of cosmetic pesticides.

All pesticides used in B.C. must be approved by Health Canada and pest control companies are required to practise integrated pest management, including pest prevention and alternative control methods.

Those who wish to participate in the public consultation process can visit www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/ipmp/ and click on the Cosmetic Use of Pesticides button. The consultation process began Dec. 16 and will remain open until Feb. 15.

gmckenna@tricitynews.com



Coun. Lou Sekora, left, said the province should be responsible for regulating pesticide while Coun. Selina Robinson, right, believes the city should also implement a ban. TRI-CITY NEWS FILE PHOTO

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