

City's pesticide fee a 'tax grab' says Charlottetown councillor

'People are in the process of losing their lawns and losing thousands of dollars'

By Cody MacKay, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 04, 2017 4:00 PM AT Last Updated: Aug 04, 2017 4:06 PM AT

Charlottetown's pesticide ban came into effect on Jan. 1. (CBC News)

Charlottetown city councillor Bob Doiron is fuming over the "unnecessary" \$50 fee city residents have to pay to apply to spray their lawn with banned pesticides.

It's nothing but a "tax grab," Doiron said.

The fee was introduced as part of a cosmetic pesticide ban in Charlottetown that came into effect on Jan. 1, 2017. The ban restricts the use of non-domestic pesticides on residential and commercial property in Charlottetown.

'I believe this is a fee put on city residents that should be returned to them' says Charlottetown councillor Bob Doiron. (CBC)

If property owners believe they have infestations of particular insects or plants they can apply to the city, and for a \$50 fee have a technician with the city confirm a diagnosis made by a professional lawn care company.

That confirmation would allow the company to use more potent pesticides on the city's banned list.

"People are upset they have an infestation of chinch bugs," Doiron said.

He said that constituents in his district are "in the process of losing their lawns and losing thousands of dollars" and that any natural remedies to combat the bugs are "not working."

"This is another fee the city shouldn't be involved in."

Residents complaining, says Doiron

Doiron said his constituents aren't the type "to fight and argue and speak out against this type of thing" but he said they have approached him to express their frustrations with the \$50 fee and the approval process.

He also added that he's spoken with pesticide applicators in Charlottetown but says he isn't being lobbied by any company to fight the fee.

Chinch bugs thrive in short, fertilised lawns. (OMAFRA)

"I haven't been lobbied by them to put this forward, I'm doing this for the residents — the residents have been the ones that are calling me and e-mailing me about this."

Doiron plans on taking residents comments to the next city council meeting on Aug. 14.

"We have many things to do in the city, and checking people's lawns shouldn't be one of them."

Deputy Mayor Mike Duffy, who is also the chair of the environment and sustainability committee, told CBC News last week that the bylaw is a "living document" and that citizens should bring any concerns to city hall, so when it is reviewed in the fall any complaints will be brought up during the discussion.

He said that since the city is in its first year of the ban he hopes residents will be patient.

"We just don't want the willy-nilly use of very strong toxic chemicals," said Duffy.