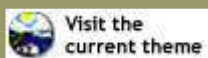



**Earth / Terre**


## Favoriser les règlements sur les pesticides

L'Association canadienne des médecins pour l'environnement (ACME) oeuvre pour la protection de l'environnement afin de protéger la santé des humains, et sa première priorité est la santé des enfants et l'amélioration efficace de l'environnement des enfants.

ACME travaille avec les organisations locales dans les municipalités de partout au Canada afin de favoriser la réglementation qui interdit l'utilisation de pesticides sur les terrains municipaux et sur les propriétés privées.

Familiarisez-vous avec les stratégies utilisées pour faire en sorte que votre collectivité adopte des règlements sur les pesticides.

# Advocating for Pesticide By-laws: CAPE's Experience

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The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)<sup>1</sup> was formed twelve years ago by a group of physicians who had become deeply concerned by the new illnesses being diagnosed in their young patients: allergies, cancers and symptoms. It is an affiliate of the Canadian Medical Association. Membership is open to all members of the public who have an interest in the effects on human health of human activity in the environment. We work closely with Canadian Environmental Law Association, with whom we share space in Toronto, with Sierra Club of Canada and with many other health organizations. We meet annually in conjunction with the Canadian College of Family Physicians.



***Protecting children from harm from the environment is a first priority of CAPE***

CAPE works to protect the environment in order to protect human health. Its goals to carry out its mission are:

- to better understand how environmental degradation affects human health
- to educate our members, other physicians, other health professionals, the public and policy makers about the issues
- to be a resource on how environmental degradation affects human health
- to take actions that will contribute to the protection and promotion of human health by addressing issues of environmental degradation
- to work with other organizations, nationally and internationally, that share our concerns and values

Its top priority is **children's health** and to effectively improve the environment for children. CAPE is working with local organizations in municipalities across Canada to advocate for by-laws banning the use of pesticides on both municipal lands and residential properties. It is a founding partner in Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment. While CAPE remains deeply concerned about the use of pesticides in agriculture we have determined to advocate for the elimination of pesticides where most children are living-in our towns and cities.

CAPE, with financial assistance from several sponsors and members of the public, produced a ten minute video which features several physicians and researchers explaining the effects of pesticides (mainly for homes and gardens) upon children's health.

Opinion polls were conducted in Peterborough, Edmonton and Ottawa. All of them indicate that a majority of residents support the reduction or elimination of pesticides for cosmetic use. The second step is to work with local residents and to communicate with members of municipal councils that a by-law phasing out the use of pesticides ought to be a top priority. Opposition from lawn care companies is an obstacle to be overcome along with public concerns that elimination of cosmetic pesticides could devalue their homes.



*Today, health should be considered  
a state of physical, mental, social  
and ecological well-being*

The experiences of municipalities who have already passed by-laws phasing out pesticides are encouraging and can be used to support arguments in favour of eliminating the use of these chemicals.

The Town of Hudson in western Quebec was the first municipality to pass a pesticide bylaw. A pesticide company, Spraytech, took them all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada where the Municipality's authority under its governing law was upheld. Since then the City of Toronto, in the face of great opposition, has passed a bylaw phasing out pesticide use. You can learn more about its implementation by visiting the City of Toronto website and that of Toronto Environmental Association. (See *websites at*

"All things are interconnected; Everything goes somewhere; There's no such thing as a free lunch. Nature bats last."

*Ernest Callenbach*

*the end of this article.)*

In Nova Scotia, an amendment to the Municipal Government Act (s. 533) gave the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) specific authority to pass a bylaw phasing out pesticides for cosmetic uses on lawns and gardens. The bylaw and progress reports on its phasing in and enforcement can be found on HRM's website. Groups advocating for a by-law can learn much from the Halifax experience.

At least two New Brunswick municipalities have taken the plunge: Shediac and Caraquet. They have relied on the general authority given to municipalities to pass bylaws to protect and promote the health of their residents under the Municipalities Act. Smaller municipalities may be less vulnerable to challenges from large companies because the market for pesticides is small.

In the fall of 2004, the Ontario College of Family Physicians published a comprehensive report, in essence a summary of the published scientific studies which link pesticides with diseases and illnesses in children<sup>2</sup>. The executive summary illustrates the reasons for urgent action to protect children:

Many pesticides persist in the environment, are often transferred long distances from their original area of application, are routinely detected in human tissue, and are transferred across the placenta and via breast milk (1, 19). Relative to adults, children eat more in proportion to their body weight, resulting in more concentrated exposures. Intakes by children of the four primary pesticides (chlorpyrifos, malathion, diazinon, and atrazine) appear to come primarily from the ingestion of solid food (2). Another common exposure source is indoor and outdoor home pesticide applications, where children may be exposed by playing on floors, treated lawns and play areas, or by handling treated pets (8). Agricultural uses of pesticides may expose children inadvertently from spray drift or farm work (31). Children present a number of unique characteristics with regard to risks from exposure to pesticides and other environmental pollutants. The most vulnerable time is during fetal development when the brain is known to be subject to environmental influences at all phases of development, with critical windows at different points (6). Since in the female, ova are formed in the fetal stage, and environmental contaminants have been found in follicular fluid, the next generation of children born may be affected by their grandmother's exposures (6). The

newborn child has low levels of the enzyme paraoxanase-1, which detoxifies organophosphate pesticides. Environmental contaminants may pose a greater risk to children than adults for another reason: children have a longer life expectancy in which to develop diseases with long latency periods. For example, if a 70-year-old adult and a 5-year-old child are exposed to a carcinogen with a 40-year latency period, the child has a much higher lifetime risk of developing adverse health consequences (20).



In a recent letter<sup>3</sup> to the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States, CAPE stated:

Research evidence clearly shows that children are particularly vulnerable to, and can suffer major adverse health effects from, pesticide exposure, including brain cancer, kidney cancer, leukemia, non-hodgkin's lymphoma, genotoxic effects, skin diseases, neurological diseases, and reproductive effects. To ignore over a decade of such evidence and deliberately endorse the exposure of infants and children to pesticides constitutes a gross violation of a child's right to a healthy environment, as well as the basic tenets of research ethics.

The Supreme Court of Canada in *Hudson v. Spraytech* endorsed the precautionary principle. While the accumulation of more data by additional studies continues, the time for urgent action is upon us.



### **Strategies for Getting a Pesticide Bylaw for your own Community**

#### **Inform yourselves and your communities**

- Research on the internet

- Talk with local landscapers, garden centers, horticulturalists and naturalists, University environmentalists; school environmental programs; child public health services
- Develop educational programs
- Apply for funds to educate your community

#### Form alliances with like-minded groups

- CAPE
- Canadian Environmental Law Association
- David Suzuki Foundation
- Sierra Club of Canada
- Local environmental groups --NBEN
- Organic product retailers
- Earth Day organizers
- Organic Gardeners and Farmers

#### Identify and educate municipal councilors

- Invite them to educational events
- Meet with them to make them aware of your views
- Attend Council meetings
- Make presentations to Council
- Get to know municipal staff

#### Prepare to meet opposition

- Learn the industry buzz words like IPM and natural substances
- Beware of accepting long established tradition
- Cultivate allies among golfers, soccer enthusiasts, and landscape employees who are sometimes at greatest risk from exposure

#### Recognize your Successes

- The Ultimate: A pesticide bylaw that bans the use of pesticides by all residents with controlled exceptions;
- Excellent: A phased in bylaw that eliminates pesticide use over a specified period of time- the shorter the better
- Very Good: a pesticide bylaw that applies to municipal lands;
- Good: Councillors better educated.

#### Some websites to consult for additional information:

▶ CAPE: [www.cape.ca](http://www.cape.ca)

▶ City of Halifax: [www.Halifax.ca](http://www.Halifax.ca)

▶ Ontario College of Family Physicians:  
[www.ocfp.on.ca](http://www.ocfp.on.ca)

▶ Canadian Environmental Law Association:  
[www.cela.ca](http://www.cela.ca)

▶ Toronto Environmental Alliance:  
[www.greenhealthcare.ca](http://www.greenhealthcare.ca) /  
[www.environmentaldefence.ca](http://www.environmentaldefence.ca)

▶ Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment: [www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)

▶ Sierra Club of Canada: [www.sieraclub.ca](http://www.sieraclub.ca)

▶ David Suzuki Foundation: [www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org)

[1] Since CAPE is an advocacy group, CHEER, a charitable foundation was formed to facilitate fundraising through charitable donations that could be used for public education, a fundamental part of changing the way we treat our environment.

[2] The full report is available on the website of OCFP or through links from CAPE or CELA

[3] CAPE frequently advocates in favour of protecting children against harm. This letter was written in October 2004 to protest the EPA's approval of a study of the effects of pesticides on children through paying their parents a small lump sum to spray pesticides in their homes and gardens.



Earth  
Terre

Water  
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Air  
Air

Theme  
Theme

Forum  
Forum

Email  
Courriel