

## City lacks resources to enforce pesticide ban, says city worker

[ERIC PLUMMER](#) / ALBERNI VALLEY TIMES  
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The city does not have the resources to ban the use of pesticides in Port Alberni, according to the municipal parks and recreation department.

This was the department's response after Coun. Chris Alemany asked for a report on the possibility of discontinuing the chemical treatment of weeds in Port Alberni.

According to the B.C. Ministry of Environment, herbicides and insecticides can be harmful to bees, which can now be legally kept in Port Alberni after a zoning bylaw approved by city council last year introduced residential beekeeping.

Insecticides in the city are limited to the occasional use of an aerosol can, but weed-killing herbicides are employed to control invasive vegetation by sidewalks and on sports fields.

"City staff use these products to assist with park and facility maintenance as part of our annual Integrated Pest Management Plan," stated a recent report from Scott Kenny, the city's director of parks, recreation and heritage. "Pesticides used by city staff are herbicides, with the most common application being non-selective Roundup as a spot spray to control weed growth on hard surface areas and baseball diamonds."

The report noted that while manually removing weeds can be viable for homeowners, the practice is "labour intensive and with reduced staffing is not a viable option" for the municipality.

The city attempted to cut down on chemical treatments in 2009 with a bylaw requiring permits to use pesticides. But 3 1/2 years later this bylaw was rescinded "over concerns about the ability to enforce the regulations and the negative impact it was having on weed control on city parks and facilities," stated the report. No permits were requested while the bylaw was in place. "Should we be concerned about it? Yes. Should we reinstitute a pesticide ban for the City of Port Alberni? No, we should not," said Kenny

during a city council meeting on Tuesday. "There's absolutely no point passing a bylaw you can't enforce."

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