

No plans to scrap pesticide ban

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Will the ban stand?

Both the Ontario Conservatives and New Democrats voted against the Liberal government's Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act (2008) when it was introduced by the Dalton McGuinty government.

Ontario voters head to the polls Oct. 6 to pick their next provincial government.

Conservative MPP Peter Shurman said his party is not making a specific commitment to revisit the pesticide ban in its election platform, Changebook, but does promise in general to reduce government red tape.

"There's no question that it's a red tape burden on small business, and the fact that it's that, and nanny-statism at its worst with no science to back it up is why we voted against it in the first place," Shurman said of the ban.

The Ontario NDP also voted against McGuinty's ban but would not kill it if the party wins the fall provincial election.

"Our problem with the legislation — and the reason we voted against it — is that it prevented municipalities from enacting pesticide bylaws stronger than the provincial law, an issue raised by the Canadian Cancer Society, the David Suzuki Foundation, and the Canadian Environmental Law Association." NDP spokesman Marion Nader said in an e-mail.

The provincial legislation trumped bylaws like the one enacted in London,

Ont., which would have imposed a minimum \$500 fine for anyone caught spraying pesticide and been enforced locally.

The NDP and others in the environmental movement were also concerned about the many exemptions, including one that allows **golf courses** to continue using the banned products, said Nader.

"If the law is to work to protect human health, the government's sweeping powers to make **unilateral exemptions just doesn't make sense,**" she said.

Ontario Environment Minister John Wilkinson said his Liberal government stays on top of the latest research related to this topic, but has no plans to change the legislation.

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