

Manitoba

## Manitoba's plan to amend cosmetic pesticide legislation receives thumbs-up from associations

Substantial savings for municipalities, says AMM president

Nathan Liewicki - CBC News

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A hiking trail at Beaudry Provincial Park in Manitoba is pictured. The province announced the new legislation to the Environment Act that would restrict pesticide use in municipal playgrounds, dog parks, picnic areas and provincial parks Monday. (Tyson Koschik/CBC)

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The province is amending its cosmetic pesticide legislation following a public consultation, and stakeholders are in favour of these changes.

Amendments to the Environment Act will provide Manitobans the opportunity to use [federally-approved cosmetic pesticides](#), while expanding the list of areas that would be protected from cosmetic pesticides being applied, Environment, Climate and Parks Minister Jeff Wharton announced Monday afternoon at the Manitoba Legislature.

Wharton said the legislation changes are in response to concerns of Manitobans who say the current methods are ineffective.

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"In response to the feedback we've heard from Manitobans, we believe that these amendments would allow for flexibility of options of cosmetic pesticide applications on lawns, while also balancing the protection of sensitive areas in our communities," the minister said.

In 2014, the Environment Act and non-essential pesticides use regulation was introduced to restrict the sale and application of prescribed pesticides for lawn care purposes.

Stakeholders and members of the public raised several concerns regarding the original legislation, including increased cost and increased usage of pesticides due to the lack of effectiveness of current products on the market.

- [Manitoba's cosmetic pesticide ban may be reviewed, says Sustainable Development minister](#)
- CBC INVESTIGATES [Restricted pesticides easy to buy in Winnipeg despite ban, I-Team finds](#)

More than 60 per cent of public consultation respondents indicated the restrictions on the sale and usage of pesticides for cosmetic use were too strict, and over 70 percent wanted to see the current restrictions reduced or rescinded.

## 'Substantial savings for municipalities'

Kam Blight, president of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and reeve of the rural municipality of Portage la Prairie, said the association has been calling on the province to reverse the 2014 ban since it was announced.

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He believes aligning with federal regulations will allow municipalities to effectively manage their green spaces while mitigating financial pressures on municipal budgets.

Over the last eight years, municipalities have been applying more expensive chemicals and doing repetitious applications that are have not been effective, Blight added.

There are also the costs of the applying the chemicals, and not just the chemical itself, but the added manpower, usage of equipment and burning of gas, which Blight called "a redundant effort."

"We can't say what is going to save us as of today, because the pricing structure has changed since back when we first had to stop and change over," Blight said.

"But we were seeing a lot of municipalities reporting that it was costing them 10 times what it did prior to this ban coming into place.

"We do know that there is going to be substantial savings for municipalities."

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## Legislation changes 'long overdue'

The Manitoba Nursery Landscape Association also approves of the legislation amendments.

David Hinton is with the association that represents the horticulture profession in Manitoba. He is pleased that the provincial government decided to update the regulations for cosmetic pesticides.

"The current legislation is arbitrary, confusing and not well understood. It is also unenforceable in compliance with current rules," Hinton said.

"Changes have been needed for some time to create better regulations that will work for all Manitobans.



David Hinton is with the Manitoba Nursery Landscape Association. (Travis Golby/CBC)

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He says the decision to rely on the Health Canada Pest Management Regulation Agency will protect the health of the province's citizens and its landscapes.

"Our green spaces contribute so much to our quality of life and produce enormous environmental benefits, but are continually being threatened by extreme climate conditions and invasive species such as the emerald ash borer," he said.

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"Changes are long overdue. The new regulations will encourage innovation and allow more options when deciding how to deal with pests that threaten our landscapes."

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The new legislation would restrict pesticide use in municipal playgrounds, dog parks, picnic areas and provincial parks, while maintaining protections for schools, child-care centres and hospitals.

This will ensure pesticides used minimize overall environmental impacts.

The legislation would allow the use of Health Canada-approved cosmetic pesticides in low-risk areas like boulevards, sidewalks, rights-of-way and fairgrounds.

Manitobans would also have the ability to apply federally-approved pesticides on their lawns.

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"We should have always been looking at Health Canada for these rules," Hinton said.

"There they are the true experts in regulating these products, whether it's for your swimming pool, your hot tub, your garden, your lawn, wherever these product types of products are being used."

NDP environment critic Lisa Naylor (Wolseley) believes the government wants to work harder with farmers and homeowners on solutions that would satisfy everybody while still keeping the worst chemicals out of our water and air, but she says this amended legislation isn't it.

"I do think it's a step back. I think it's a step back for climate change," Naylor said. "I don't think that any Manitobans want more chemicals in our water and in our air."

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