



Natalie Forstbauer has created a petition to stop the use of glyphosate in parks and playgrounds and she's taking it the school district and city hall. (Jenna Hauck/ The Progress)

Petition to ban glyphosate coming to Chilliwack this fall

'Let's link arms Chilliwack' to ban the weed-killer, according to online petition with 430+ signatures

JENNIFER FEINBERG / Jul. 29, 2019 11:15 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS

Natalie Forstbauer is hoping to make a case for banning the weed-killer glyphosate in Chilliwack by presenting to both the Chilliwack School District and the City of Chilliwack this fall.

As an organic farmer and author, Forstbauer said she's very concerned about the use of glyphosate in Chilliwack neighbourhoods.

"We have created a [petition](#) to ban the use of glyphosate on our school grounds and in our city," Forstbauer said.

She is working on a documentary on the subject, and the

online petition has more than 430 signatures so far.

Forstbauer, who is one of 12 children raised on an organic/biodynamic family farm in Chilliwack, said for her, this initiative against the weed-killer is about making local parks and schoolyards as green and as safe as they can be.

“We are taking this petition along with our concerns to the Chilliwack school district and to the city to implore them to be a world leader, and follow in the footsteps of other communities and countries who have banned the use of glyphosate to protect the health of our children and environment.”

It's the key ingredient in Bayer's — formerly owned by Monsanto — product Roundup and is the best-selling herbicide in Canada. It's sprayed to kill weeds but it's also used to desiccate or ripen grains so they can be harvested early.

Some people are growing concerned about cumulative levels of it entering the food chain.

The messaging around the safety of glyphosate is similar to what health officials said about tobacco smoking at first, decades ago.

“We were told cigarettes were safe, too,” Forstbauer said.

Local government and school board officials would do well to employ “the precautionary principle” and prohibit its use, she argues, despite assurances from makers, industry reps and some farmers regarding its low toxicity compared to other types of herbicides and pesticides that

could be used instead.

More than 40 municipalities in B.C. have outlawed it, and 17 countries have banned it, with Austria becoming number 18 on July 2, 2019.

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"Most importantly, which is what our local farmers will want to hear, is that at this time we are just requesting a ban on school grounds and city property, as well as domestically for personal use."

Agricultural use of pesticides and herbicides is under federal/provincial jurisdiction, not municipal, she underlined.

But nonetheless there are simpler alternatives that could be employed to mow, burn, steam or pull weeds and grass.

"We can educate our children by making yards and school grounds safe and edible, and implement programs that teach kids how to grow, forage, weed, and wildcraft," Forstbauer said.

Many who advocate for the use and safety of the weed-killer say the ingredients break down quickly in soil over time.

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Several organizations and scientific groups contend that there is no demonstrated evidence that it is carcinogenic

and argue against its cancer-causing likelihood.

But Forstbauer points to the fact that Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) is advocating for a ban on non-essential uses of it in agriculture, as well as for personal use.

Also the World Health Organization's (WHO) affiliated International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) declared glyphosate a "probable carcinogen" about four years ago.

"The effects of glyphosate exposure and associated risks add up," according to the petition summary. "It's in the food we're feeding our children and on our playgrounds and parks. It's making our kids sick.

"Let's link arms Chilliwack and show our city we, the citizens of Chilliwack, want glyphosate banned from use on our school grounds, on our playgrounds, on our streets, and on/in our foods.

The petition can be found [here](#) or email to Natalieforstbauer@gmail.com

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