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Halifax Regional Council

May 16, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Bauld", written over a horizontal line.

Jim Bauld, Acting Director
Environmental Management Services

DATE: May 10, 2006

SUBJECT: Pesticide By-Law

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Regional Council - May 9, 2006,
7.1 Councillor Hum - Pesticide By-Law P-800

BACKGROUND

Councillor Hum stated Council has not received the pesticide report for 2005, and requested that staff respond to the following questions:

- How did things go last year from an operations perspective with regard to number of permits, enforcement, meetings with the industry and associated organizations regarding limits on chinch bugs and on threshold numbers,
- How can HRM move forward to improve and enhance the Pesticide By-law,
- Expand upon the issue of retail sales and possible restrictions,
- How can we move forward with the assistance of the Provincial and Federal governments,
- How can HRM enhance enforcement opportunities,
- How can HRM raise public awareness of the sale of pesticides.

Councillor Smith requested the report include the application of topsoil under sod in developments and how the success of this initiative is measured.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that a staff report be provided addressing the issues and concerns identified.

Councillor Hendsbee requested the report indicate how the Lot Grading By-law is affected by the use of pesticides.

Councillor Adams questioned how the list of allowable and non-allowable substances is defined, how the list was determined and where did the list of those products come from, how many convictions were there on the Pesticide By-law, how does the use of pesticides impact the health of children.

Councillor Uteck requested the report provide an update as to the current by-law prosecutions; where is HRM going; what new progress is going to be made this year. She noted the products have not been taken off shelves and asked what was the education process.

Councillor Streach stated the issuance of permits should be industry driven and controlled. The Councillor asked that the report include the process to have 2-4-D added to the list of allowable products.

Councillor Mosher suggested the education process for pesticide use be included with the information provided to new residents similar to that done for refuse collection.

Councillor Hum stated her intention is to see how HRM can continue to move forward with enhancement of the current by-law and look at information from last summer and how improvements can be made such as a reduction in the number of permits. The Councillor requested the report expand on the current legislation.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION

Environmental Reporting

Since the inception of the By-Law in 2000, each year staff has prepared an Overview Report summarizing the various activities, progress to date, etc. The intent was to gradually mainstream the Pesticide By-Law activities into everyday operations and decision making, including reporting.

Everything is interconnected in the environment, including the use of pesticides and HRM has taken an integrated and systematic approach to clean air, land, water and energy. This includes reporting and performance measuring. Staff has been preparing the first ever Sustainability (State of the Environment) Report for HRM which includes the Pesticide By-Law updates under the Clean Land chapters.

Staff had hoped to have this 70 page Report to Regional Council's sub-committee on Energy and Underground Services and then to Regional Council by the end of April 2006.

The exercise was more complex and resource demanding than originally expected and has taken longer. The draft is mostly completed and it is planned to bring the entire report forward in the near future.

In the meantime staff has attached copies of the draft Clean Land Section, including the Pesticide

By-Law and Sustainable Landscape Maintenance Practices sections. These provide responses to several of the questions raised by Council on May 9th.

Responses to the balance of questions are as follows:

Federal/ Provincial Opportunities

Staff will continue to liaise with Federal and Provincial staff on the following:

Federal:

- Pesticide registration and sales is federal government jurisdiction. Federally registered and approved pesticides can still be sold in HRM regardless of the By-Law. The By-Law is specific to use of pesticides on residential properties and municipally owned lands.
- To move forward the federal government and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) would have to act upon:
 - The 2002 Parliament approved health related changes to the Pest Control Products Act, i.e. registration and sales of products, and the PMRA must move forward on getting new safer alternatives approved, i.e. soap for chinch bug.

Provincial:

- The NSEL is required to collect data from pesticide vendors and applicators as part of the provincial licensing system.

HRM has requested some of the general data to help analyze trends; etc. rather than relying mostly on anecdotal information. This is important data that could be measured.
- Recently, the Province of Quebec has banned certain pesticide products, including prohibiting the sale of products.
- Staff has asked the NSEL about a similar approach for Nova Scotia and are waiting a response.
- The adaptation of Province wide measures by NSEL would be very helpful for HRM, as well as for other NS municipalities.

Allowable/ Non Allowable Substances

Administrative Order #23, Respecting Pesticides, Herbicides and Insecticides Excluded From the Pesticide By-Law, is a companion document to the Pesticide By-Law P-800 and provides a list of Permitted Pesticides that are excluded from the provisions of the Pesticide By-Law. The list was prepared by Regional Council's Adhoc Committee on Pesticides and approved by Regional Council on August 22, 2000.

Addition/ Deletion of Substances

In order to facilitate the addition/ deletion of substances from Administrative Order #23, staff developed in 2001, a simple yet effective protocol to amend the Permitted Pesticides List.

Since then, this protocol has worked well assisting Council in approving three new substances to the list.

The herbicide 2-4-D does not meet the criteria to be included in Administrative Order #23.

Health and Children

Attached are copies of the official positions of the Canadian Cancer Society and Canadian Lung Association regarding the ornamental (cosmetic) use of pesticides.

Also attached is an April 25, 2006, news clipping from the Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health Safety regarding the impacts of pesticides on children.

Staff have other health references as well on file.

Enforcement

The excerpts attached from the Sustainability Report provide a chart on enforcement numbers which have declined steadily over the past three years. Staff believe this is an indicator of the success of the program.

Further to this, there were nine summary offence tickets issued in 2005 with one not guilty, four fines/ convictions and four set aside by the court because the names on the tickets were not the official legal entity (name of owner/ company).

Each year training and refresher sessions on the By-Law are carried out with Enforcement staff. This has recently taken place for the 2006 season.

Topsoil/ Lot Grading By-Laws

The best defence against pests is healthy plants and soil, and this includes sufficient soil.

The excerpts from the Sustainability Report (Sustainable Landscape Maintenance Section) provide background on efforts to date.

A review of the Topsoil/ Lot Grading By-law by Planning and Development include an assessment of the various existing By-Laws to determine what will be needed to create a new or harmonized Lot Grading By-Law, including any topsoil considerations.

Public Education and Awareness

A comprehensive public education and awareness program was implemented when the By-Law was adopted in 2000, focussing on sustainable landscape maintenance practices.

This has evolved over the years and has been greatly enhanced through community and industry

participation, in essence a somewhat grass roots social marketing approach that has been very effective.

In 2006, it will include:

- Updates in the Naturally Green Newsletter
- Workshops and Information Sessions with major vendors and Education at Source
- Updating of the series of Fact Sheets on Sustainable Landscape Maintenance Practices
- Major Home Show Exhibits
- Signature Environment Event - June 10, 2006
- Enhanced Web Site
- Sustainability (State of the Environment) Report
- Lectures, Workshops, etc. throughout the year

Staff will also follow up with the appropriate agencies/ departments regarding information packages to new residents, i.e. Councillor Mosher's suggestion.

Summary

Halifax Regional Municipality's leadership in pesticide use reduction has become a national and international model with over 100 Canadian cities and towns and a number of international cities using it as a guide to follow.

HRM Council and citizens strive for a healthy, sustainable, vibrant community, and pesticide use reduction is an integral and important component.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications as the Pesticide By-Law programs are part of the existing EMS operating budget.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

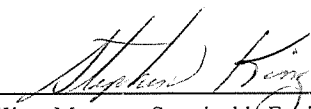
N/A

ATTACHMENTS


- Excerpts from Proposed Sustainability (State of the Environment) Report
- Letters/ Positions: Canadian Cancer Society
Lung Association of Canada
Capital District Medical Office of Health
Newspaper Article - Children's Health

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by :


Stephen King, Manager, Sustainable Environment Management Office, 490-6188

Financial Review :


Ferdinand Makani, MBA, CMA, Financial Consultant, Finance Services, 490-6902

Excerpt from the Unproofed Draft of the Proposed Sustainability (State of the Environment) Report

State of the Environment Report

Sustainable Land Use - Clean Land

Background

HRM citizens greatly value the importance of open spaces, urban forests, HRM'S many environmental assets and the enhanced quality of life it brings.

This is integral to HRM's corporate theme of a "healthy, sustainable, vibrant community".

This is the first municipal Sustainability (State of the Environment) Report and the "sustainable land use - clean land" and related performance measures most likely will expand. At this point in time HRM's environmental strategy towards sustainable land use - clean land includes the following focus areas:

1. Sustainable Land Use - Regional Plan
2. Management and Protection of HRM's Environmental Land Assets
3. Solid Waste Management
4. Pesticide Use Reduction and Sustainable Landscape Maintenance
5. Roadside Salt Management Program

These major focus areas and initiatives under each of these categories are described later in the Initiatives/ Solutions section.

Issues

1. Land use planning fully considers the protection of water, land and air and recognizes the fundamental importance of HRM's defining natural features and environment.
2. Protection of HRM's corporately owned environmental assets is maintained/ enhanced.
3. Solid waste management and related at source diversion/ separation rates remain high.
4. Land pollutants, i.e. pesticides are eliminated/ minimized at source.
5. 2002 Parliament approved changes to the federal Pest Control Products Act to enhance public safety and environmental protection have not been put in place yet.
6. Sustainable maintenance and related land management practices are advocated.
7. Environmental concerns from use of road salt.

Goals - HRM's goals include:

1. Sustainable land use planning is carried out through instruments such as the Regional Plan.
2. Short and long term protection and management of HRM's land related environmental assets.

3. Solid Waste is operationally and cost effectively managed in a sound environmental manner.
4. Pesticide use in residential areas and on municipally owned property is minimized and/ or eliminated.
5. Continue to lobby the federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency and Health Canada to put in place previously approved changes to the Pest Control Products Act including how pesticides are classified, approved and sold. In essence more consistent control/ regulations at point of sale.
6. Promotion of sustainable land maintenance practices and related land management practices.
7. Systematic management of road salt use.

Meaningful Results - Performance Measures for these overall goals include:

- 1a. Delivery (number, dates, impact) of the Regional Plan “Functional Plans” that have a relationship to sustainable land use planning and protection of HRM’s environmental assets.
- 1b. Percentage of impervious surfaces. Impervious surfaces can impede a number of beneficial natural processes.
- 2a. Urban Forest and related master plans put in place (number, dates, impacts).
- 2b. Percentage of urban forest canopy cover in populated areas.
3. Waste diversion rates.
- 4a. Number of pesticide permits issued, permit approval percentage. (Special Note: Pesticide use data from the Province would be very helpful to help determine trends, however, they advise that it is presently not available in a format useful to HRM.)
- 4b. Number of residents, businesses, etc practising sustainable alternatives to pesticide use; number of private/ public initiatives aimed at sustainable landscape maintenance practices.
5. Amount of road salt used.

Initiatives/ Solutions

1. Sustainable Land Use - Regional Plan

Protection of water, land and air is one of the cornerstones of the Regional Plan. The plan contains policies and implementation measures intended to promote the environmental and economic sustainability of the Region, through land-use planning.

The Plan advocates for the assessment of potential environmental impacts in order to examine alternatives and to determine how negative environmental effects can be avoided or mitigated.

Deliverables of the Regional Plan

Functional Plans include:

- Active Transportation

- Affordable Housing
- Business Park Development
- Capital District Public Infrastructure
- Climate Change-Mitigation and Adaptation Plans
- Communication & Public Education Components
- Communication Tower/ Antennas Strategies
- Community Energy *includes Wind Energy
- Cultural Plan
- Economic Development
- Emission Reduction (corporate and community wide)
- Finance
- Halifax Harbour
- Heritage
- Potential Hazards to Development
- Open Space
- Opportunity Sites Redevelopment
- Public Transit
- Regional Parking Strategy
- Road & Road Network
- Stormwater Management
- Transportation Demand Management
- Urban Forest Master Plan
- Urban Streetscape
- Wastewater Management
- Water Quality Monitoring
- Underground Utilities

Detailed information on the Regional Plan is available on line at www.halifax.ca/Regional Plan.

2. Management and Protection of HRM's Environmental Land Assets

This is the first ever corporate Sustainability (State of the Environment) Report. It is anticipated that this section will expand considerably in the future.

The focus in this Report is the urban forest and related lands.

2.1 Urban Forest Management

Trees provide vital benefits such as oxygen, shade, wind breaks, erosion protection, habitat for many creatures and act as natural air filters.

Trees also provide aesthetic value to our communities and help delineate our streets and land forms.

HRM residents greatly value the urban forest with its environmental and health related benefits along with its natural beauty and form.

HRM's urban forest is under a number of urban stresses that are resulting in a complex challenge to manage, preserve and protect the urban forest.

These challenges include:

1. Recovering from devastating impacts such as Hurricane Juan.
2. Pest and disease threats (i.e. Brown Spruce Longhorn Beetle)
3. Climate change impacts and related stresses (i.e. droughts)
4. Lack of canopy in new developments
5. Protection and preservation of existing canopy (including trees on HRM property)
6. Up to date data and mapping
7. Resourcing/ staffing issues around maintenance and management
8. Protect trees on private property
 - subdivision development
 - cutting on private lands (not including resource rural lands)
 - protection of heritage trees
9. Redress utility conflicts - vegetation management

Remedies include:

1. Protective legislative measures
2. Urban Forest Management Functional Plan

Time frames:

The Urban Forest Management Functional Plan is scheduled to be completed by _____.

Further information on HRM's urban forest plans and strategies is available on line at www.halifax.ca/.

3. Solid Waste Management

Info from Jim Bauld and Laurie Lewis

4. Pesticide Use Reduction and Sustainable Landscape Maintenance Practices

4.1 Pesticide Use Reduction

Background

The fundamental principles behind Pesticide By-Law P-800 include human health and environmental protection.

After an open public process, By-Law P-800, Respecting the Regulation of Pesticides, Herbicides and Insecticides, became effective August 19, 2000. This By-Law balanced the general restriction on pesticide products with a list of permitted products and a notwithstanding clause which enabled certain pesticide use under specific conditions, and incorporated a process to notify neighbouring properties.

The enabling legislation (granted in 1999) from the Province of Nova Scotia was specific to residential use properties and properties owned by the municipality.

An overview of the implementation strategies is as follows:

Year 1 (2000): Ban on cosmetic use of pesticides on municipal property and commencement of public awareness programs.

Year 2 & 3 (2001/02): Commencing April 1, 2001, a ban on cosmetic use of pesticides on residential properties located within a 50 metre radius of:

- a property registered as being occupied by persons at risk who provide medical documentation:
- the boundary of any property containing any schools, licenced day care, playground, park, church, licensed seniors' residence, university or hospital.

Year 4 (2003): Commencing April 1, 2003, a general ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides would apply to all residential and municipal properties in HRM.

Pesticide Permit Application/ Assessment/ Education

In accordance with Section 6 of the Pesticide By-Law, under the notwithstanding clause 6(2), a pesticide application may be carried out within a prohibited area if it is to control or destroy plants or insects if such plants or insects constitute a danger for human beings, or to control or destroy insects which have infested a property.

An effective, yet simple Pesticide Permit Application system was established in 2001 to assist with the administration of these notwithstanding clauses. Permits may be requested by residents or companies, and an online application process (www.halifax.ca/pesticides/permit_login.html) was introduced in 2004 to help ensure that over 80% of site visits were carried out the next business day after a request was received.

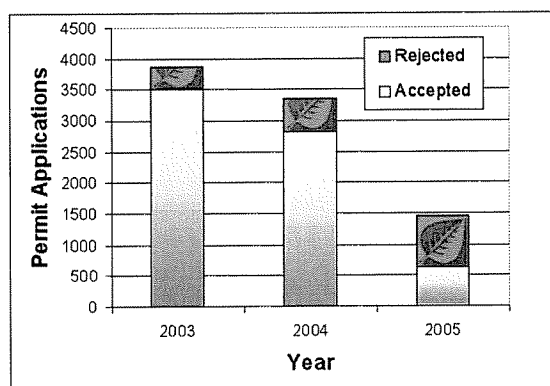
Outstanding Issues (at the federal level)

Federal Pest Control Products Act (PCP Act)

- Nation wide consistency
- 2002 Parliament approved changes towards enhanced human health and environmental protection are not in place yet

Options

Annual Pesticide Permit Application Assessments



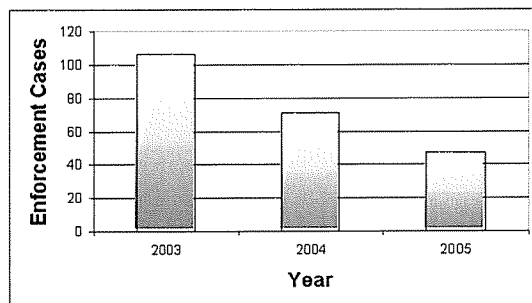
Note: Pesticide Permit applications have steadily declined over the past 3 years.

Education has more recently focussed on chinch bug problems in order to prevent them and develop alternative approaches. Over 98% of permit applications have been for chinch bug problems. For the first time in 2005, the use of use liquid dish soap and water (2% solution) was promoted for chinch bug treatments and many residents were pleased to have an alternative to the two traditional pesticides; Diazinon had already been removed from stores across Canada in 2004, and carbaryl (seven) is targeted by the federal government for removal for cosmetic use.

By-Law Enforcement

Community Projects, By-Law Enforcement Services are responsible for the enforcement of the Pesticide By-Law. Enforcement is compliance oriented. For a first time offence, the approach to achieving compliance will be through education and the issuance of a notice informing the accused of the violation. The investigation of a complaint includes a site inspection and taking witness statements from complainants, alleged violators, and lawn care companies if applicable. Information provided to the violator outlining responsibilities relative to the By-Law and possible solutions to correct the problem. For second and subsequent offences, a notice will be issued to the violator, informing the accused of the violation and a Summary Offence Ticket may also be issued in the amount of \$215.00. When dealing with repeat offenders, consideration will be given to proceed with Long Form prosecution. A Long Form prosecution requires the defendant to appear in court, and the option of settlement out of court is not available.

Annual Pesticide Bylaw Enforcement Cases



Note: Pesticide By-Law Enforcement cases have steadily declined over the past 3 years.

Education has been an important part of the enforcement programs to date, site visits have helped clarify issues for residents and companies as the By-Law was phased in. Residents are increasingly aware of the products that are restricted, and the requirements for signage and notification of neighbours when permits are granted.

Looking Ahead

As more and more homeowners, landscapers and property maintainers transition to more sustainable landscape maintenance practices, much healthier, resilient and more functional landscapes are resulting.

It will be important to help ensure sustainable landscape maintenance products, services and methods keep pace including the development of safe pest management products where necessary. This includes activity at the federal level with the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA).

For More Information

HRM works with community groups, industry associations, researchers and universities, to coordinate and improve programs. Further information is available on line at www.halifaxenvironment.ca.

4.2 Sustainable Landscape Maintenance Practices

Background

There has been a recent groundswell of public support for more sustainable landscape maintenance practices, and HRM has taken a leadership role. For instance, early indicators in HRM showed strong public support for the Pesticide By-Law programs, based on a Corporate Research Associates public survey indicating that 93% of property owners were aware of and had some knowledge of the Pesticide By-Law, and 85% of respondents said they were interested in learning more about

sustainable alternatives to pesticides. HRM's waste management system including composting and recycling is also recognised internationally for its high participation rate and success in diverting waste from landfills. With community, industry, and institutional commitment, sustainability will remain a top priority in helping secure a safe, healthy, vibrant community today and for future generations.

Solutions/ Initiatives/ Opportunities

By involving community members through public education and awareness, workshops, fact sheets, website information and Naturally Green Newsletters, HRM has developed new waste management systems, pesticide by-law programs, and other sustainability initiatives. HRM has also built partnerships with industry and university researchers to develop more sustainable practices, research key issues, and to develop better guidelines for products and services that affect the environment.

One example has been the development of a compost topdressing program for sportsfields using the municipal source-separated compost from the green bin programs. This initiative combined the need for new approaches respecting the Pesticide By-Law programs with the finished product from HRM's composting efforts. It was found that the finished compost could significantly increase organic matter levels, critical soil nutrients, and relieve compaction on sportsfields, providing an excellent organic soil amendment that would prevent the need for other costly inputs. It has now been incorporated into the maintenance regime for many sportsfields around HRM.

Another related example is the development of guidelines for topsoil and compost use based on collaboration with Landscape Nova Scotia, the Resource Recovery Fund Board of Nova Scotia, and Dalhousie University researchers. Many recent landscape installations for new residential developments has had too little soil and poor quality soil, resulting in many landscape and pest problems for homeowners after they move in. There are currently no requirements or quality control measures for these landscape installations and this may be partly due to a lack of understanding regarding the use of local soil and compost products. The collaborative efforts to establish guidelines for soil and compost use has been a first step in addressing this issue. HRM will continue to work with partners to ensure that new landscapes have sufficient high quality soil and compost where they are needed, this will be helpful for avoiding landscape problems by retaining water on site, resisting drought and pest problems, and improved plant health.

Looking Ahead

Further challenges will emerge and we will continue to apply the same principles in moving toward more sustainable practices. This includes the application of the precautionary principle where serious or irreversible harm to human health or the environment may result from activities or products. We will minimize wastes, use resources wisely, and maintain a long-term sustainability perspective as we make decisions.

Climate change impacts and rising fuel costs will increasingly affect energy use, causing energy efficiency and naturalized design to become more important in landscape management. Native and locally adapted species that do not require high amounts of water and other inputs will remain attractive through changing conditions. Practices and products that depend heavily on fossil fuels will be minimized through innovative use of locally produced products, as in the case of compost topdressing for sportsfields, in order to avoid rising costs and environmental concerns.

As the new Harbour Solutions treatment plants come on-line, a top quality soil amendment will be

made at the Aerotect Park Biosolids Plant. The product will be made from well processed biosolids from the Harbour Solutions Plants and calcite products blended into a consistent fine granular type soil amending product.

Further information on sustainable landscape maintenance practices and products is available on line at www.halifax.ca/environment.

5. Road Salt Management Program

Info from Transportation and Public Works

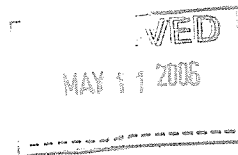
Excerpt from Unproofed Draft of the Proposed Sustainability (State of the Environment) Report

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Clean Water	
Clean Energy – Background 1.0 Community Energy Plan 2.0 Support for Natural Gas Distribution 3.0 District Energy/Cogeneration 4.0 Energy Efficiency 5.0 Renewable Energy	
Health and Environment - Letter from Dr. Strang	
Acknowledgements	



Canadian Cancer Society
Société canadienne
du cancer

NOVA SCOTIA DIVISION



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Darren Dick
President

Maureen Summers, M.Sc.
Executive Director

May 10, 2006

Stephen King
Manager, Senior Advisor
Environmental Management Office
Halifax Regional Municipality
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, NS
B3J 3A5

Subject: N-1549

RE: Position of the Canadian Cancer Society on Ornamental Pesticides

Dear Mr. King,

Thank you for raising the issue of ornamental pesticides and for requesting from the Canadian Cancer Society clarification of its position on this issue. As you know, the Canadian Cancer Society is very concerned about the use of potentially carcinogenic substances for the purpose of enhancing the appearance of lawns and gardens. Pesticides are being applied in spaces that are accessible to all Nova Scotians, and are potentially harmful to our health through inhalation, skin absorption and oral ingestion.

The Canadian Cancer Society has formed its position and concern about ornamental pesticides based upon the conclusions of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). The IARC has stated that some substances used in pesticides are classified as known, probable, or possible carcinogens. In some cases, evidence linking pesticides and cancer will not be scientifically definitive, but it is suggestive and growing. When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or to the environment, precautionary measures should be taken, even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.

Since ornamental use of pesticides has no countervailing health benefit and has the potential to cause harm, we call for a ban on the use of pesticides on lawns and gardens.

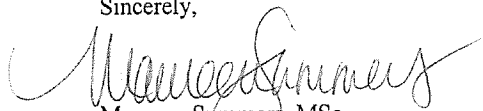
The research linking pesticides and cancer is growing, and is demonstrating the need to control the use of ornamental pesticides. The Ontario College of Family Physicians completed a pesticides literature review in April 2004; see link below. This research provides information on the connection between pesticides and various cancers: brain, breast, kidney, liver, ovarian, pancreatic, prostate, and stomach.

<http://www.ocfp.on.ca/English/OCFP/Communications/CurrentIssues/Pesticides/default.asp?s=1>

The Canadian Cancer Society believes that appropriate action should be taken to limit the risk to human health.

Thank you again for your strong support and commitment to bring clarity and purpose to this important public issue.

Sincerely,



Maureen Summers, MSc
Executive Director

**2006 Canadian Lung Association
Position on Cosmetic Pesticides**

The Lung Association advises against the use of cosmetic pesticides. If your neighbours are spraying, try educating them in collaboration with the local garden club or centre, by organizing community group, neighbourhood or workplace talks. If you or your family members show immediate health effects, notify your provincial Departments of Health or Environment. Some provinces have toll-free lines that you can call to request notification of pesticide treatments in your vicinity.

Last updated on April 3, 2006



Capital Health

Public Health Services
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Tel: 902-481-5800
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May 11th, 2006

Stephen King
Manager, Sustainable Environment Management Office
Halifax regional Municipality
PO Box 1749
Halifax, NS
B3J 3A5

Stephen
Dear Mr. King:

I am responding to your May 10th e-mail looking for information regarding the evidence on the health effects of exposure to pesticides. The following is based on my training and experience as a Community Medicine specialist.

While not definitive, the balance of evidence in the medical literature shows strong links between pesticide exposures and cancers, neurologic impairment and reproductive effects. Unfortunately, the process for registration of pesticides in Canada does not adequately consider this medical literature. I have attached a recent article further outlining this issue

Given the medical evidence, as well as evidence of the environmental effects of pesticides, as a society we should be taking appropriate steps to minimize our use of pesticides. However, pesticides are used in many different ways (e.g. agriculture, landscape, forestry) and each particular use needs to be viewed separately. When determining appropriate steps for decreasing use, the risks and benefits of each specific use need to be carefully evaluated. My position on the "cosmetic" use of pesticides is that the harms outweigh the benefits, the benefits can be readily achieved with non-chemical alternatives and therefore banning such use of pesticides is appropriate.

By-laws such as HRM's pesticide by-law are supported by a wide range of medical, environmental and community group, including the Canadian Cancer Society. I have attached a recent report from the National Committee on Environmental and Occupational Exposures, which is part of the Primary Prevention Action Group of the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control, outlining this support.

Locally, while Doctors Nova Scotia does not have an official position on HRM's pesticide by-law, they are on record as supporting a reduction in the use of pesticides and advocate for the use of non-chemical alternatives where possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

Robert Strang MD, MHSc., FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

ling insults and demanding an end to the standoff.

Leading weed killer linked to cancer, nerve illnesses

By DENNIS BUECKERT
The Canadian Press

OTTAWA — The most commonly used weed killer on Canadian lawns and gardens — known only as 2,4-D — is "persuasively linked" to cancer, neurological impairment and reproductive problems, says a new study.

The report in the journal Paediatrics and Child Health directly contradicts a recent re-assessment of 2,4-D by the federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency, which found the product does not cause cancer and can be used safely on lawns if directions are followed.

The product 2,4-D is found in many common pesticides, and has been controversial for decades.

By coincidence, the study appeared the same day that New Democrat MP Pat Martin tabled a private member's bill that would ban the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes.

Martin says more than 50 million kilograms of pesticides are still used in Canada each year.

His bill would require pesticide manufacturers to prove their products are safe before being placed on the market, rather than regulators being required to prove the products are dangerous.

The authors of the new study say the federal re-assessment is largely based on animal studies, which cannot predict consequences in humans. They also say many of the studies are confidential, supplied by the manufacturers themselves.

"The 2,4-D assessment (by the federal agency) does not approach standards for ethics, rigour or transparency in medical research," said medical writer Meg Sears, speaking for co-authors Robin Walker, Richard van der Jagt and Paul Claman.

Van der Jagt is chair of the Canadian Leukemia Studies Group; Walker is past president of the Canadian Pediatric Association; Claman is a professor of reproductive medicine at the University of Ottawa.

"What we find is that the (federal agency) looks at a completely different

set of information than the doctors do," Sears said. "They are looking at what happens in animals and their information is largely proprietary."

"The doctors are looking at what is happening in children and people living across the country and they are seeing major reasons for our problems."

"This is why we have a complete disconnect between what's happening at the federal level and down where the doctors are saying there are problems."

A spokeswoman for the Pest Management Regulatory Agency declined to comment on the study, but said it is being reviewed. She acknowledged the agency uses confidential studies in some cases.

About 90 Canadian municipalities and the entire province of Quebec have already banned the non-essential use of pesticides. Other attempts to impose a ban, in Ottawa for example, have failed.

Our Annive

Excerpt — Halifax Herald — April 25/06

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