

## Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Working Group – One Pager

On June 5, 2014, Bill 55 ([The Environment Amendment Act – Reducing Pesticide Exposure](#)) was passed in the legislature. This followed three years of discussion, debate and consultation - including a [recommendation for a provincial ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides](#) (from the Manitoba Round Table for Sustainable Development) and the [‘Play it Safe’ consultation on cosmetic lawn pesticides](#) – and was seen to be an important step in protecting the health and wellbeing of vulnerable members of our communities.

This legislation specifically targets *non-essential pesticide use*. **Exceptions** currently include:

- Application in the agricultural sector
- Forestry activities, golf course operations and turf or sod farms
- Protection of public health and safety where no effective alternative exists
- Control of high-risk noxious weeds and poisonous or invasive species

To the members of this working group, this was seen to be an important step, given that the potential negative health effects of continued and widespread application of cosmetic pesticides are significant. In a [2012 Systematic Review of Pesticide Health Effects](#), the Ontario College of Family Physicians reviewed 142 studies documenting significant health effects related to reproductive health, neurodevelopmental behavioural health in children, and respiratory health in children and adults. Winnipeg-based emergency physician, Dr. Paul Doucet reported that *“peer-reviewed science consistently shows links between pesticide exposure and childhood cancer, birth defects, neurological problems, respiratory illness, and more. When non-toxic options are readily available, we should not put our health at risk simply for the appearance of a lawn.”* And in 2015, [the World Health Organization listed glyphosate as a probable carcinogen](#), driving home the need for precaution and limitation of exposure in all but the most essential applications.

Considering all these documented health risks, we encourage our government to uphold existing legislation, and seek to find creative, safe solutions to the landscaping and maintenance of our green spaces. Organic lawn care options exist, and regular lawn maintenance is shown to be effective in managing dandelions and other common weeds. As we know from the work of Rachel Carson in 1962, chemicals like DDT were also seen to be harmless – even *‘miraculous’* in their positive effects – but were eventually shown to have widespread and significant negative impacts. Upholding Bill 55 is a prudent and low-cost health measure; it makes sense.