

## **Weakening cosmetic pesticide regulations will increase health and environmental risks for Manitobans**

### **WHAT IS THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT PROPOSING?**

- The Government of Manitoba plans to loosen current restrictions on non-essential uses of pesticides by amending legislation to:
  - allow the use of currently banned pesticides on municipal and residential lawns, and
  - permit the sale of currently banned pesticides at retail outlets without limitation.

### **WHAT WOULD BE THE IMPACT OF THESE CHANGES?**

- At present, only the less risky pesticides on an allowable list can be used on lawns. The Government's proposed changes would allow municipalities and lawn care companies to apply the more toxic pesticides on lawns and boulevards, increasing the exposure of residents to these harmful chemicals.
- Individuals would be able to freely purchase currently banned pesticides for their own use without restrictions, further increasing pesticide exposures around homes.

### **WHEN WERE RESTRICTIONS ON COSMETIC PESTICIDES INTRODUCED IN MANITOBA?**

- A previous provincial government enacted the current restrictions on non-essential uses of pesticides in 2015. Manitoba then became the seventh province in Canada to protect public health by regulating non-essential pesticides.
- Health and environmental organizations at the time voiced strong support for pesticide restrictions that would reduce risks to human and environmental health. Despite opposition from pesticide manufacturers, lawn care companies and some local governments, the legislation was passed by the Legislature.

### **WHY ARE RESTRICTIONS NEEDED?**

- Manitoba's current ban represents sound, science-based public policy. Independent, peer-reviewed evidence has established that serious health risks are associated with human exposure to chemical pesticides.
- Assessments of pesticide health risks have been reported in four systematic analyses of peer-reviewed health studies, including one by the Ontario College of Family Physicians in 2012, and another by the Prince Edward Island Public Health Office in 2015. (See details at <https://cosmeticpesticidebanmb.com/resources/>).
- This body of research indicates that exposure to pesticides increases risks for a range of harmful health impacts, both in adults (diabetes, cancer, neurological disorders) and in children (adverse reproductive, neurological, developmental and respiratory outcomes).
- When cosmetic pesticides are a source of such exposures, these are preventable harms.
- A province-wide opinion poll conducted by Probe Research in 2016 found that a clear majority of respondents favoured restricting non-essential uses of pesticides.

- In addition to human health benefits, restricting non-essential uses of pesticides also helps to protect the health of pets, reduce risks for essential pollinating insects, reduce pesticide contamination of waterways, and preserve biodiversity.

### **DON'T MUNICIPALITIES AND HOMEOWNERS NEED PESTICIDES TO CONTROL WEEDS ON LAWNS?**

- No. A study of six Canadian cities with cosmetic pesticide bans, conducted by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment in 2018, found that:
  - Satisfactory and publicly accepted levels of weed control can be achieved at reasonable cost without using the more toxic herbicides.
  - Instead of using the riskier pesticides, cities with cosmetic pesticide restrictions focus on turf maintenance through practices such as mowing, aeration, overseeding, fertilization and top-dressing. Participants in the CAPE study reported that the more toxic products were simply not needed.

### **DOESN'T HEALTH CANADA APPROVE PESTICIDES BEFORE THEY CAN BE SOLD AND USED IN CANADA?**

- Many physicians and medical researchers don't find federal pesticide approval processes to be adequate. In their view, Health Canada's pesticide regulatory system is not sufficiently precautionary.
- In fact, as new health evidence emerges to confirm pesticide risks, the federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency frequently finds itself having to introduce additional and more restrictive conditions on pesticides that were formerly given a green light. Some have been removed from the market.
- As for non-essential uses of pesticides, Health Canada itself advises, "It is good practice to reduce or eliminate any unnecessary exposure to pesticides." -- Health Canada, "Pesticides and Health" (2007)

### **WHAT CAN MANITOBANS DO?**

- **Tell the Provincial Government and your MLA that you want to maintain current restrictions on non-essential uses of pesticides** to continue protecting Manitobans from unnecessary health and environmental risks.
- Remind them that people want to live in healthy communities where they and their children are not exposed to preventable pesticide health risks. And Manitobans also want to avoid unnecessary harm to pets, pollinators and waterways.
- Bill 22, which would critically weaken non-essential pesticide restrictions, is scheduled to come to a vote in the current session of the Legislature, which ends on June 1. There is only a narrow window to voice concerns.

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