



December 16, 2011

Hon. Bill Bennett, MLA Kootney East (Chair)

Hon. Rob Fleming, MLA Victoria-Swan Lake (Deputy Chair)

VIA:

Kate Ryan-Lloyd

Deputy Clerk and Clerk of Committees

pesticidescommittee@leg.bc.ca

Re: CropLife Canada's submission to British Columbia's Special Committee on Cosmetic Pesticides

Dear Messrs.' Bennett & Fleming:

On behalf of Canada's plant science industry, CropLife Canada appreciates the opportunity to provide the Special Committee on Cosmetic Pesticides with our written submission.

As articulated in my presentation to the committee, CropLife Canada is the trade association representing the manufacturers, developers and distributors of plant science innovations – pest control products and plant biotechnology - for use in agriculture, urban and public health settings. Our members represent approximately 98% of the pest control products sold in Canada. All of these companies have significant business interests in British Columbia and provide valuable tools that are a critical part of the value chain for BC's agricultural, forestry, industrial vegetation and other sectors.

Our products are valuable tools that contribute to improved human health and a better environment. They are among the most researched and highly regulated products available to Canadians.

If you have any questions regarding our submission please contact me at petellep@croplife.ca or 613-230-9881.

Thank you,
Pierre Petelle
Executive Director, Regulatory Affairs and Non-Ag Uses
CropLife Canada



Nobody disputes that urban green spaces offer both physical and mental public health benefits, enhance the environment, and contribute to a strong and vibrant economy.

What is often overlooked, however, is that because urban green spaces are living ecosystems, they are subject to insect, weed and disease pressures which sometimes require intervention if the ecosystem is to survive.

Our products are valuable tools that contribute to improved human health and a better environment. Users of our products:

- Offer healthy foods to Canadians and the world's growing population
- Ensure secure energy transmission and safe rights-of-way
- Protect the environment and human health
- Enhance urban spaces which in turn increase levels of physical activity and community pride

CropLife Canada believes integrated pest management is the best approach. In instances where a pesticide is the best option, only thoroughly assessed; highly regulated Health Canada approved products should be used. There is no scientific merit for safety distinguishing between "natural" and synthetic pesticides and calls for bans based on the precautionary principle overlook the fact that Health Canada already employs the precautionary principle before approving our products. To this end, our member companies invest significantly in developing pest control products that are safe and effective tools for keeping pest pressures at a non-threatening level.

We support a strong, science-based regulatory system for all pesticides and our industry ensures proper lifecycle stewardship through world-leading programs.

Canada's plant science industry supports the use of pesticides to address real pest problems. This applies in any setting whether it be forestry, structural, golf, agriculture or lawns and gardens. The use of a pesticide to solve a pest problem in a lawn or garden is certainly not "cosmetic" or "unnecessary", therefore we are concerned about the ongoing characterization of these uses as such.

Pesticides are regulated by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). As a branch of Health Canada, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency's primary mandate is protection of human health and the environment.



We are very concerned by suggestions that evidence exists to call into question the safety of pest control products that are judiciously reviewed by Health Canada. If there are groups with information about the unacceptable risks to the environment or human health, then these should be brought to the immediate attention of Health Canada officials for assessment so that all Canadians can be protected.

In response to increasing public concern and some municipal actions, the federal government did - with the support of its provincial counterparts - re-evaluate the eight most widely used lawn and garden products as a priority group beginning in 1999 to determine if further regulation regarding their use and sale was required. As a result, some uses were changed or restricted to further reduce any risk to the user, neighbours or the environment. They also published, again in conjunction with the provinces, a brochure on IPM practices for lawn and garden use.

In 2006 a new *Pest Control Products Act* was brought into force. Canada is highly respected around the world for its rigorous science-based framework and this Act, which is up-to-date on every aspect of scientific risk assessment and evaluation and which takes into account the precautionary principle, is perhaps the most modern pesticide legislation in the world. The new Act has provisions for initiating special reviews, extra safety factors for vulnerable populations and a fully transparent process for reviewing data and evaluation reports upon demand. The modern legislation and related regulations at the federal level are robust and offer many provisions that anyone can avail themselves of if they have concerns about the safety of any product.

Pesticides undergo over 200 separate tests addressing a range of health and environment issues, including cancer risk before a product can be registered. In the end, there is virtually no other product purchased by consumers that has gone through the level of scientific scrutiny and regulatory oversight as pesticides.

In determining which of the products our industry develops should be approved, PMRA bases all assessments on science and the inherent properties of both natural and synthetic chemicals are examined as part of risk assessment.

The reality is that Canada has the most transparent process in the world. All of the data used by the PMRA is open to anyone who wishes to access it. PMRA's Reading Room, located in Ottawa, provides access to all of the research submitted as a part of the



assessment process. There you can inspect test data and evaluation reports used to register or amend a pesticide.

Bans that ignore the scientific evidence that existing federal regulations are based on actually jeopardize the health and safety of the very communities governments say they are trying to protect because stigmatization of pesticides will jeopardize all uses and lack of science and predictability will have a major negative impact on innovation.

BC took a leadership position among Canadian provinces when it drafted the current Integrated Pest Management Act in 2003. This forward thinking legislation, when combined with the federal legislation, ensures the proper use of pesticides where they are required while preventing over reliance. There is no evidence that the combination of the federal and provincial acts are failing in their tasks to protect the health of British Columbians.

The usefulness of integrated approaches makes sense in B.C. since agriculture and urban landscapes often closely coexist. The legacy of the Agricultural Land Reserve means that in the Lower Mainland, for example, BC has productive farmland coexisting in an urban environment. Many farmers are concerned that a lack of effective weed and pest control on adjacent properties could impact the productivity of farmland. Their concerns are validated by farmers in the Ontario township of Guelph-Elmira, where city council recently agreed to reinstate roadside herbicide applications in rural areas of the township after learning how the lack of control affected local farmers - in some cases triggering increased herbicide applications or increased tillage.

In a resource rich province like BC, pesticides are used by a wide range of economic sectors including forestry, agriculture, power transmission and rail. Banning pesticides deemed safe by Health Canada sends a mixed message. There is no supportable rationale for selectively restricting access to certain sectors while allowing their use by others.

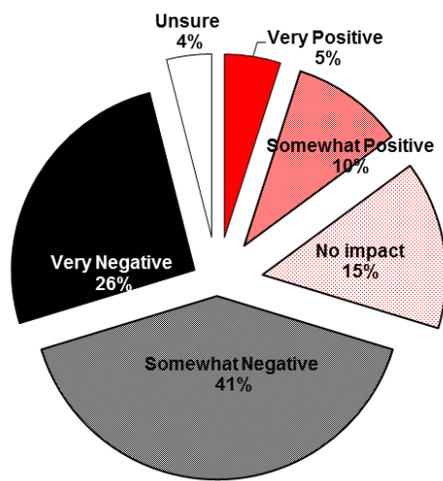
A non-science based ban would also hurt economic growth and job creation. Recent polling in Ontario conducted by BlackSheep Strategy (March 2011) to understand if the Ban has impacted Ontario landscape businesses showed significant negative effects.

After accounting for the margin of error associated with the survey results to this question, we can be 95% certain that:

- Between 10% and 20% of all Ontario landscapers have been positively impacted by the ban

- Between 10% and 20% have experienced no impact, and
- Between 60% and 72% of have been negatively impacted.

Which of the following best describes the overall impact, if any, that Ontario has had on your business?



% of all Landscapers who answered the question (n=192)

A second study, focused on Ontario homeowners, conducted by Blacksheep Strategy between June 14 and 15, 2011, (margin of error +/- plus 2.6% 19/20) found the following:

- Ontario’s pesticide ban has resulted in more weeds and insects in lawns and gardens and homeowners feel they no longer have the tools they need to control these pests.
- Two thirds of homeowners feel that they have more weeds in their lawns since the ban came into effect
- 78% feel there is definitely a need for more effective weed control and 66% feel there is a need for more effective insect control products.

The ban has not been as successful as the government of Ontario would like others to believe:

- Almost half (49%) of Ontarian homeowners would like the ban eliminated or relaxed.



- Ontarians are willfully breaking the law by using pesticides on their lawns and gardens that have been banned.
- 30% of all homeowners are using pesticides that they have left over from before the ban.
- Close to one-quarter of homeowners are developing their own mixtures or bringing pesticides in from another province or the US.

Not all provinces have come to the same conclusion as Ontario and Quebec. The Alberta government looked into this issue a few years ago and prohibited weed and feed products starting in 2010. Their recommendation was that the two components of these combination products were better applied separately and only to the areas needing them. The ministry of environment in Alberta, in response to a request from the City of Edmonton, recently stated that no further restrictions are warranted and that “Alberta Environment will continue to strongly support using science-based evidence and will not create restrictions or laws that conflict with the federal government, who we rely on for health and safety assessments. Restricting access to products that are designed and approved to be used safely conflicts with our assessment of the public’s need for access to all tools available for controlling a variety of pests.” The Government of Saskatchewan has also come to the same conclusion that further restrictions are not warranted.

We would encourage the committee to engage Alberta Environment on their approach and the scientific findings that have led them to their conclusions. The ministry has some statistics on water sampling and detailed break-outs of urban pesticide use by type that might be of interest to this committee.

In Summary

Our industry is science based and innovation focused with extensive regulatory oversight through Health Canada and BC’s Ministry of Environment.

Unscientific restrictions of pesticides undermine existing regulatory safeguards, stigmatize all uses of pesticides and create additional unnecessary costs for local governments and school boards, businesses and homeowners.

CropLife is supportive of the initiation of a public education campaign in collaboration with other provinces and the federal government on proper use of household chemicals, including pesticides to address any real or perceived misuse. As an industry,



we welcome the opportunity to work with you in developing appropriate messaging and offer our assistance in delivering it to consumers.

We are committed to providing safe and effective products that protect the value of both private and public green spaces. We advocate for the proper use of our products and we believe in the rigorous process put in place at the federal level.

We look forward to working with the Special Committee on Cosmetic Pesticides to discuss our concerns and develop a workable path forward.