

Subject: FW: Private use of pesticides

Date: Mon, 11 Jul 2005 09:27:09 -0700

From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

To: <fonvca@fonvca.org>

Subject: RE: Private use of pesticides
Importance: High

Dear Mr.

Not far from where you reside beaches have been closed again by Health Authorities since as a result of pollution, it is not safe and people can no longer swim. This scenario has occurred with predictable regularity each and every year for the last 30 years. I find this to be utterly disgusting.

Not far from where you reside also, boats are routinely emptying their human waste into the ocean since successive governments have been unable and/or unwilling to install appropriate facilities as one would expect in a developed country trying to attract tourists and host the 2010 Olympics.

However, what I find most objectionable is that the public not only tolerates this disgusting situation but actually turns a blind eye to such barbaric backwardness. I have made numerous attempts via Council initiatives to address this problem in the past. I do not recall a single instance where the public in the District came out and/or spoke in support of any of these initiatives, but gets exited because they are in danger of not using pesticides on their lawns - truly a peculiar "civilised" society, so called.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist

Cc: FONVCA (E-mail)
Subject: Private use of pesticides

Dear Mayor and Council,

Colour me disgusted! I understand you are considering another unenforceable (at least, without incurring considerable unnecessary expense) bylaw, this time to prohibit use of pesticides within the District.

I am in principle opposed to any additional restrictions on the rights of individuals, including property owners, to make their own informed decisions regarding the use or misuse of their persons and property. If the District decides not to use herbicides and pesticides on municipal property, that's good. If certain herbicides or pesticides that are PROVEN carcinogens are to be banned, that's ok, too (but a federal responsibility). But a general ban of all herbicides and pesticides, affecting all individuals, is going after a gnat with a cannon, and that's bad. It will become just one more bylaw that will be widely ignored, because it will be recognized as being a senseless further intrusion by government into the private lives of individuals.

Good government earns respect. Good laws will be obeyed. Bad laws will be disobeyed, and if not enforced will lead to disrespect of government. Surely our police and bylaw officers, and our courts, have more important issues to deal with than the occasional use of a herbicide to knock down some noxious weeds? Or a pesticide to get rid of noxious pests (such as carpenter ants, and wasps)?

Why waste the District's money and resources considering a ban on the use of products that are controlled and made legally available by our federal government?

Just so you know where I'm coming from -- a few years ago I re-landscaped our front yard, and engaged a Master Gardener to provide advice and assistance. She told me of several ways to avoid, and get rid of, various weeds. I have followed her advice with considerable success, and greatly reduced my use of herbicides and pesticides. However, there are still instances (such as when moss invades a lawn) where there is no natural way to eliminate the pest, short of replacing the lawn entirely. That is impractical, so I must resort to a herbicide. In our damp climate and acid soil moss is a common problem.

I simply do not agree that municipalities should be regulating the use of herbicides and pesticides by individuals. Nor do I agree that District Council, or staff for that matter, have the expertise to make decisions regarding the use of pesticides by such as the members of the BC Landscape Nursery Association. I refer you to the article by Cyril Doll included in Brian Platts' email to you, and to the various statements on this matter by Dr. Len Ritter, executive director of the Canadian Network of Toxicology Centres, which none of you seem to be familiar with (or have chosen to ignore).

Education is the way to go. You have made a good start in that direction, and you should keep it up. There is no need for the "big brother's big stick" approach. It won't work, and I doubt if you fully realize the cost attached if you attempt enforcement, and how little real difference this bylaw will make. What we don't need at this time is a useless bylaw that will simply result in increased municipal taxation and interference with the private lives of residents. Instead of blindly jumping on the environment bandwagon, take a deep breath and do some wise reconsideration. I'm sure if you do, you will decide not to proceed with yet another bylaw, and we all will be the better for it.

Sincerely,

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