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The North Columbia Environmental Society, in conjunction with the Columbia Basin Trust and the City of Revelstoke has initiated a plan for public awareness in the area of cosmetic pesticides, with the goal of a reduction of pesticide use leading to a pesticide ban bylaw.

**The first step in this process is a public presentation:**

**Pesticides, Revelstoke, Health, and Cancer Presentation. Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>.** A panel of physicians and experts from the Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Physicians for the Environment, Canadian Medical Association, Toxic Free Canada, and Interior Health, will speak on cosmetic pesticides in our community. This panel presentation is very interesting, scientific, thought provoking, informative, and well worth your time. 2 p.m. for community stakeholders, city council, and staff; Council Chambers, and for the public at the Revelstoke Community Centre, 7 p.m.

**Health professional organizations against cosmetic pesticide use:**

Canadian Cancer Society	Canadian Pediatric Society
Canadian Medical Association	Ontario College of Family Physicians
Canadian Institute of Child Health	Cdn Assoc. of Physicians for the Environment
Interior Health Authority	Medical Staff, Shuswap Lake General Hospital
Selkirk Medical Clinic	

**In our area:**

Friend of Revelstoke & Glacier National Park	School District #19
Revelstoke Youth Soccer	Illecillewaet Greenbelt Society
North Columbia Environmental Society	

What do the Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Physician's for the Environment, The World Health Organization, David Suzuki Foundation, Union of British Columbia Municipalities, and the Government of Ontario and Quebec have in common? A common goal for is the complete ban of cosmetic pesticides. The *BC Pesticide Control Act* defines a pesticide as any material intended to prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate an undesired pest, "cosmetic" means that pesticides are used purely for aesthetic purposes.

**The Canadian Medical Association urges all levels of government to show leadership by refraining from the cosmetic use of pesticides and aggressively employing safer alternatives to the use of chemicals.**

Dr. Richard Jagt, Chair of the Canadian Leukemia Studies Group says "recent studies make it crystal clear that 2,4-D, used to kill weeds on lawns, causes non-Hodgkin's lymphoma." Studies have found a **2-3 times** increased risk of leukemia associated with childhood or pre-natal exposure to household or garden pesticides.

Concern over pesticides has risen steadily in recent years; more and more studies point to health problems associated with pesticide exposure. Acute symptoms include headaches, sleep disturbances, diarrhea, throat and eye irritation, and vomiting. Longer-term, chronic exposure has been associated with reproductive problems,

miscarriage, birth defects, and a variety of cancers. Children are most susceptible to chemical exposure because of their developing immune systems.

The environmental impacts of pesticides are considerable. Many linger for decades in the environment contributing to soil and air pollution, as well as the unintended destruction of wildlife and beneficial species such as bees and butterflies. **A federal committee on the environment published an unprecedented report recommending a complete ban on cosmetic pesticides.** There are enough effective, nontoxic alternatives to pesticides do exist and ensure a safer future for our gardens, our children, and our planet.

**Schools, Playing Fields and Parks:** Pesticide application on school grounds and playing fields is of special concern, because they are frequented by children, pets and senior citizens. Kids and animals have repeated contact with the grass, giving ample time for direct pesticide exposure to occur, as well as inhaled pesticide residue. Furthermore, kids commonly eat lunches and snacks during recess and lunch hour outside in the grass.

**Why playing fields are tricky:** Proper turf management of playing fields requires a regular maintenance routine that includes aeration, de-thatching, top-dressing, and over-seeding. There is a common perception that this is both more costly and more labour intensive. However, over 130 Canadian municipalities have gone cosmetic pesticide-free, proving that pesticide-free sports fields are both possible and functional. Included in the list of cities are Vancouver, Halifax, Toronto and Montreal – all cities with multiple playing fields to maintain. In fact, many municipalities have embarked on programs to decrease the amount of pesticides applied to their playing fields. School fields are controlled by the school district, while the municipality is responsible for city parks. There is also a perception that weeds in playing fields are extremely detrimental and dangerous to athlete's health. A sound management plan will keep weeds down.

Who in your family spends the most time on your lawn? Your dogs and cats. Pets come into direct contact with lawn and garden pesticides much more frequently than humans. Whether it's rolling around in the grass, playing with a frisbee or relaxing in the shade, pets are directly exposed to pesticides. 2,4-D has been linked to canine malignant lymphoma. Other pesticides are linked to increased aggression in animals and enlarged thyroid glands in cats.

Pets can also track pesticides indoors, functioning as a carrier. Once inside, pesticides can be spread throughout your carpet and on your furniture, unknowingly exposing your family to these toxic agents. What's more, many pesticides require sunlight to help them break-down. Once inside, they require a longer amount of time to break-down, meaning that they can hang out in your house and lead to low-dose exposure. Residue of 2,4-D, the active ingredient in many herbicides, was present in carpets a full year after outdoor application.

**Pesticides are a group of chemicals that include:** insecticides (insect control), herbicides (weed control), fungicides (diseases caused by fungi), rodenticides (rodent control), and fumigants (substances used in gaseous form to control insects). Herbicides are a nicer sounding word for a subgroup of pesticides. Lawn chemicals contain proven cancer causing chemicals like dicamba, xoluene, xylene, hydrocarbons, and cadmium. Tests have shown high levels of these toxins are tracked into our homes by us, our kids, and our pets. They are linked to testicular and bladder cancer in pets and a whole host of cancers in children and adults.

130 municipalities in Canada, including 12 in BC have adopted pesticide bylaws. Ontario and Quebec have completely banned cosmetic pesticides in a bid to protect its most vulnerable citizens, children. Playing fields, golf courses, playgrounds, and school yards are often treated with pesticides, a practice that is putting dangerous chemicals in close, and repeated proximity to children.

**The North Columbia Environmental Society is asking your group for a written letter of support for a cosmetic pesticide ban within the city of Revelstoke. If you still have questions, please bring them to my attention and attend our expert panel on Cosmetics and Pesticides, presenting at the RCC, Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm (as mentioned at the start of this letter).**