

Legislation should let cities pass stronger bylaws on lawn chemicals

Doctors Applaud Ban on Pesticide Sales, Urge Law to Go Further

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Toronto— Today's passage of an Ontario-wide ban on lawn and garden pesticide sales is a major step for public health, but must be amended to allow cities to enact more health-protective bylaws, says the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE).

The organization – which has a membership of 3,000 doctors and concerned citizens – says the new *Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act* has the potential to be the most health-protective legislation of its kind in North America.

“We applaud the overall thrust of the Act,” says CAPE Executive Director Gideon Forman. “But we regret the fact it stops cities and towns from going even further. If a municipality wants to give its citizens more protection, why would the province stand in the way? We’ll be working with other health organizations at the regulatory stage to try to get these municipal bylaw-making powers reinstated.”

CAPE will also work to ensure the regulations prohibit – or severely limit – pesticide use on golf courses.

“There are a number of Canadian golf courses that are pesticide-free,” says Forman. “There is simply no reason to be using these toxic chemicals anymore. They harm waterways and aquatic wildlife and threaten the health of golf club employees. The science shows that golf club superintendents – who spend a lot of time around pesticides -- have a higher rate of mortality from cancer than the general population.”

CAPE says congratulations for passage of the bill should go to grassroots environmental activists and health professionals. “These are the people who have been working on pesticide restrictions for decades,” says Forman. “The new bill is very much due to their perseverance over many, many years.”

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