



Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
ERO #019-0601
Amendments to the Pesticide Regulation (63/09 General)
December 12, 2019

From: **Ontario Council of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW Ontario Council)**

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the Consultation regarding Amendments to the Pesticide Regulation (63/09 General). **CFUW Ontario Council** represents 49 clubs throughout the province. We are a grassroots volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to issues of public concern.

Over the years we have been very involved in this area, even presenting to the Standing Committee on Social Policy concerning Bill 64, Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act, 2008. We have continued that involvement with ensuing policy, and are pleased to speak to this consultation.

BACKGROUND:

Across Canada many provinces and municipalities have enacted legislation controlling cosmetic pesticide use, to protect their citizens-and their ecosystems, which support human and plant health. The Ontario approach has been through the maintenance of the Ontario Pesticide Advisory Committee (OPAC).

CFUW has appreciated the in-depth and expert attention of OPAC to describe and protect ecosystem health in urban areas, providing pollinator havens, and promoting overall human and animal health in areas of concentrated habitation. The 11 categories assigned to cosmetic pesticides have worked well, and have made Ontario a model in Canada.

We acknowledge the efforts of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, Health Canada (PMRA) to provide a broad scope overview and assessment of those herbicides and pesticides that have become part of agriculture and horticulture, primarily since WWII. There have been and continue to be concerns about PMRA assessment:

- 2-4D, for example, is approved for lawn use under the PMRA, but is not approved by OPAC, as glyphosate (Roundup) is also prohibited under the cosmetic pesticide ban. PMRA does not address the concept of cosmetic bans of pesticides in its overall evaluation strategy.

- Although conditional registrations have been discontinued, there are still large numbers of pesticides with previously assigned conditional registrations for which there is no timeline for resolution of their status.
- There is not a satisfactory process in place for assessment of cumulative and bioaccumulation effects of pesticides. For organophosphates, e.g., one of the most lethal categories, although the PCPA mandates cumulative assessment, the PMRA is planning to assess each one individually before looking at interactive and cumulative effects.
- The PMRA is vastly overloaded, and backed up on re-evaluations of pesticides. In light of new learning and new techniques of interpreting pesticide effect, pesticides are required by law (PCPA) to be reassessed every 15 years. This is far from happening. *“More than 400 pesticide active ingredients registered before 1995 must be re-evaluated applying modern scientific methods. PMRA has committed to complete this work by 2020, but 35 large and complex reviews remain incomplete. Concurrently, the PCPA requires the re-evaluation of every registered pesticide on a 15-year cycle, as well as unscheduled special reviews of health or environmental risks in certain circumstances.”*
- PMRA has put phase-out dates on products that do not reflect the scientific evidence and immediate danger. Imidacloprid (neonic) is one example. The literature is very clear in pointing out it should be withdrawn immediately due to aquatic invertebrate harm. PMRA withdrawal is currently scheduled for 2021.
- The vast majority of evidence considered in registration is provided by the pesticide companies themselves, and in some cases, this is the information reviewed for major reviews called for on issues of health. The glyphosate review, for example, was not based on independent testing and evaluation, despite strong requests, and considerable anecdotal evidence.

We also are very concerned at the “post-bill 132” reintroduction of a cosmetic pesticides ban list as proposed. It would be administered for future additions/deletions by one person, a government appointed “director.” To have this much discretion in the hands of one person, and an “in house” person at that, opens the door to potential serious problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- We strongly recommend maintenance of the Ontario Pesticide Advisory Committee, which enables an arms-length and more concentrated review of new (and old) pesticides coming to market than is possible with the PMRA, as noted in the difficulties cited above. We believe that the health of our urban ecosystems, including human and animal health, is at risk without this intermediary assessment.
- We also urge the Provincial Government to maintain and strengthen controls over pesticides (pesticides and herbicides) that affect the wider ecosystems of our province through

unintended spread enabled by wind, water and wildlife (insects among others). This spread, often compounded by bioaccumulation has put our pollination dependent agricultural industries at risk, along with animal and human health.

- In particular we strongly recommend retention of Ontario based tracking and evaluation of neonicotinoid sales and use. We appreciate that three neonics have been named for removal by the PMRA, but there are others, and indeed may be more in the future. We recommend that vendor sales continue to be reported, and that sales data continue to be publicly posted. We also recommend retention of third-party assessment of pest threats as a requirement for accessing neonic treated seeds.
- “Neonics are highly toxic to bees and other beneficial organisms. Seed treatments represent the largest use and have resulted in widespread environmental contamination, contributing to the precipitous decline of pollinators.” (Environmental Defence). The agricultural economy would lose in the long term as pollinators disappear, as well as all surrounding ecosystems if we do not act responsibly now for the future.
- The health of our terrestrial ecosystems, of our aquatic ecosystems, and indeed of ourselves is strongly linked to robust control of toxins in our environment.

In summary, CFUW Ontario supports retention of the neonic and cosmetic pesticide controls now in place, and the retention of the Ontario Pesticides Advisory Committee.

CFUW ONTARIO COUNCIL

Ontario Council of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) is a voluntary, self-funded, non-profit organization, which is affiliated with the national Canadian Federation of University Women. Among our main concerns is a clean safe environment for both our own health and that of the planet.



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Relevant CFUW Policies:

Non-Essential (Cosmetic) Pesticides: Registration and Education (2002)

RESOLVED, That the Canadian Federation of University Women urge the Government of Canada and provincial governments to take the following immediate actions regarding non-essential (cosmetic) pesticides, particularly parkland, lawn and garden pesticides.:

1. Implement independent, periodic laboratory evaluation of all pesticides currently on the market, and all future pesticides, applying the principles of scientific objectivity recognized by leading medical journals (including the Canadian Medical Association Journal).
2. Require evaluation criteria for pesticide registration to include expanded measures of extended environmental processes: persistence and spread, bioaccumulation, biomagnification, chemical and biological interactions, and genetic impact, as well as full public disclosure of all ingredients (including formulants/inerts)
3. Continue to expand consideration of ecosystem impact in approval of pesticides, refusing registration to those pesticides harmful to all non-target organisms that function as integral components of our ecosystems and which sustain healthy ecosystems through biodiversity.
4. Implement public education initiatives that explain ecosystem theory, and expand current initiatives that encourage alternative forms of landscaping and methods of lawn and garden care that promote ecosystem health (including human health) and biodiversity.

Saving our Pollinators and our Environment: Moratorium on the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides (2015)

RESOLVED, That the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) urge federal, provincial, territorial, regional and municipal governments of Canada to implement immediately a moratorium on the sale and use of the neonicotinoid class of pesticides.

RESOLVED, That CFUW urge the Government of Canada to conduct or obtain independent, peer-reviewed, scientific studies on the effects of the neonicotinoid class of pesticides prior to the lifting of any moratorium.

RESOLVED, That CFUW urge the Government of Canada to make the full, unabridged results of the independent, peer-reviewed, scientific studies available for timely public review and consultation prior to the lifting of any moratorium on the sale and use of the neonicotinoid class of pesticides.

Resources:

Adebayo Adeyinka; Louisdon Pierre. **Organophosphates.**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK499860/> Last Update: May 14, 2019.

Canada. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, *A Review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, Report and Government Response.*

<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/ENVI/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=8817796>

CAPE Pesticide Campaigns: <https://cape.ca/campaigns/pesticides/federal-pesticides/> (In partnership with CELA, Environmental Defense and Ecoterre)

- <https://cape.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Letter-to-chief-science-advisor-FINAL.pdf>
- <https://cape.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/1.Comment-letter-on-PMRA-Cumulative-Risk-Assessment-Framework-April-17-2017.pdf>
- <https://cape.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2.Let-PMRA-Conditional-Registrations-Mar-2016.pdf>

Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Canada. Report 1 — Pesticide Safety. Fall 2015 http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_cesd_201601_01_e_41015.html#hd4c

Environment and Climate Change Canada, News Release, June 29, 2018. News Release: *Government of Canada is working to improve Canada's law on pollution prevention and toxic chemicals, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/06/government-of-canada-is-working-to-improve-canadas-law-on-pollution-prevention-and-toxic-chemicals-the-canadian-environmental-protection-act-1999.html>

Environmental Defence. Ontario must reverse course on Pesticides Regulation changes to protect pollinators. <https://environmentaldefence.ca/2019/11/14/ontario-must-reverse-course-pesticides-regulation-changes-protect-pollinators/> November 14, 2019.

Government of Canada. Summary of Pesticide Regulations across Canada (Federal, Provincial and Municipal): Urban Landscapes. <https://cnla.ca/uploads/pdf/Pesticide-Regulation-Across-Canada.pdf> .

Health Canada: Health Canada releases final pollinator re-evaluation decisions for neonicotinoid pesticides. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2019/04/some-cancellations-and-new-restrictions-to-protect-bees-and-other-pollinators.html> . April 11, 2019.

Health Canada, Pest Management Regulatory Agency/Regulatory Operations and Regions Branch Compliance and Enforcement Report 2016-2017, as mentioned in Green Budget Coalition. *Recommendations for Budget 2019. 1. Tackling Toxics and Pesticides*, p.13 <http://greenbudget.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/GBC-Toxics-Pesticides-2019.pdf>

Health Canada, PMRA Stakeholder Web Session, 1 November 2017, Sir Frederick Banting Research Centre. Presentation by Margherita Conti, as mentioned in Green Budget Coalition. *Recommendations for Budget 2019. 1. Tackling Toxics and Pesticides*, p.12 <http://greenbudget.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/GBC-Toxics-Pesticides-2019.pdf>

PMRA. Pesticides and pest management: Frequently asked questions. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/consumer-product-safety/pesticides-pest-management/frequently-asked-questions.html> last modified: 2019-02-15

Roberts, J. R., C. J. Karr, et al. Pesticide Exposure in Children. PEDIATRICS 130, no. 6 (December 1, 2012): <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/6/e1757>