



MEDIA RELEASE

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Federal Agency Failing to Protect Canadians from Pesticides

Federal Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Julie Gelfand, released her report on the safety of pesticides registered for use in Canada this week. The report, which audits the processes applied by Health Canada's Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency (**PMRA**) to the regulation of pesticides, suggests that the PMRA is failing to protect Canadians and the environment from chemical pesticides.

The Commissioner found that the PMRA continues to make heavy use of 'conditional registrations' that allow companies to put their pesticides on the market before they have submitted the data and studies needed by the PMRA to assess their risk assessments. Some of these conditional registrations have been in place for up to 20 years. "The PMRA is supposed to be reviewing the evidence submitted by companies to ensure that they will not harm Canadians or the environment" explained Kim Perrotta, Executive Director for the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE). "This is like putting the fox in charge of the henhouse."

The Commissioner found that 80 of the 7,000 pest control products on the market have been conditionally registered; 29 for more than 5 years and nine for more than 10 years. Eight of the nine products that have been conditionally registered for more than a decade are neonicotinoid pesticides (or neonics) that have been strongly linked to increased mortality among bees, harmful impacts on other pollinators, and adverse effects on the broader ecosystem. "The international Task Force on Systemic Pesticides has concluded that neonics are likely to produce major adverse effects on ecosystem services such as pollination that are vital to food security" added Perrotta.

The Commissioner's report identifies several other ways in which the PMRA has systematically failed to meet its own processes. It found that the PMRA was moving too slowly when re-evaluating pesticides that have been on the market for more than 15 years and was not assessing the cumulative health effects of pesticides when required to do so.

In response to this report, Health Canada has announced that it will end new conditional registrations. "We applaud the new Federal Minister of Health for moving quickly to plug this hole in the process, but there is much more to be done" offered Dr. Warren Bell, the past founding president of CAPE. "It is important to note that the Commissioner examines evaluation processes, but does not assess the quality and validity of the scientific documentation accompanying pesticide registrations. This is an area of critical concern, because most evidence of safety reviewed by the PMRA comes from manufacturers. This increases the risk that pesticides might be approved that present unacceptable hazards to human health or the environment."

The Federal Commissioner's report can be accessed at: [Commissioner's Report on Pesticides 2015](#)

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