

Children should have a space free of toxic pesticides

On August 30, 2016, CAPE released a new report which examines provincial laws and municipal bylaws across Canada that have been used to ban the cosmetic use of toxic pesticides on lawns and gardens. See <https://cape.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Pesticides-Policy-Report-FINAL.pdf>

There is a robust body of evidence that links pesticide exposures to certain types of cancer in children and adults, deficits in the mental and motor development of children, and adverse reproductive effects such as low birth weights and cleft palate. While the increased risk associated with pesticides is considered small by some, many researchers and public health professionals have recommended that exposure to toxic pesticides should be avoided or minimized, particularly for non-essential uses such as lawn and garden care.

CAPE found that while seven provinces have cosmetic pesticide bans, only two provinces provide strong protection from toxic pesticides: Ontario



Kim Perrotta
Executive Director CAPE

and Nova Scotia, which scored an A- and a B, respectively. Both of these provinces ban the use of toxic pesticides for gardens, shrubs and trees, as well as lawns. And both laws are structured around a white list that identifies the pesticide ingredients/products that can only be used for cosmetic purposes because they have been found to be safe, low in toxicity, and not persistent.

The white list approach has also been adopted by Manitoba (which scored a B-), but it applies only to herbicides used on lawns. Unfortunately,

the current government in Manitoba is considering withdrawing this law when it should be extending it to gardens, shrubs and trees.

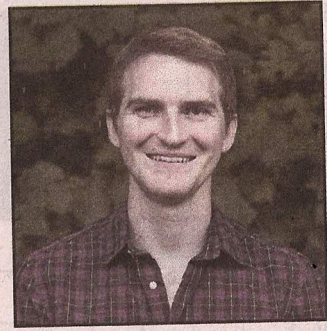
Quebec's current regulations (which scored a C) are not as protective as those in Nova Scotia and Ontario because they only apply to about 20 active ingredients when used on lawns. Quebec is the only province in the country to provide some coverage to indoor environments. It applies a white list approach to indoor environments frequented by children, such as child care centres. Given the sensitivity of children to toxic substances and their increased potential for exposure (because they spend more time on floors and put their hands in their mouths more than adults), this is an important public health policy that should be adopted by other jurisdictions. In November 2015, Quebec proposed a new pesticides strategy that would overhaul its approach to agricultural pesticides as well as those used for cosmetic purposes.

While Newfoundland and Labrador has a law banning pesticides, the law only applies to five active ingredients when applied to lawns. PEI and New Brunswick have laws banning the use of 2,4-D on lawns. Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan have no laws prohibiting the use of toxic pesticides on lawns or gardens.

The CAPE report, *Cosmetic Pesticides – Provincial Policies & Municipal Bylaws: Lessons*

Learned & Best Practices (cape.ca/pesticide-policy-report), identifies and discusses best practices for both provincial laws and municipal bylaws. For a high-level summary, please review the accompanying background report found at www.cape.ca/blog

Submitted for County Sustainability Group by Kim Perrotta – Executive director of CAPE and Ian Arnold MHS, LLB, lead author.



Ian Arnold
CAPE

