

New Poll Results Released: Canadian Cancer Society calls for leadership candidates to support cosmetic pesticides ban in BC

FEBRUARY 18, 2011 (Vancouver) – With a new poll showing more than 70 per cent of British Columbians believe exposure to cosmetic pesticides increases their risk to cancer and threatens the environment, the Canadian Cancer Society wants all leadership candidates to pledge introduction of legislation banning cosmetic pesticides.

“In addition to recognizing the health risks, more than 70 per cent of British Columbian support a phase out of cosmetic pesticide use on public and private properties,” says Barbara Kaminsky, CEO Canadian Cancer Society BC and Yukon. “It is important that the next leader of the B.C. government introduce strong legislation this year. We have asked for this action for the past three years and believe legislation is long overdue.”

Released today, the Canadian Cancer Society commissioned Innovative Research Group to conduct a poll following the completion a 60-day consultation process BC initiated last year. The Ministry of Environment received more than 8,000 comments, signatures on petitions, or submissions in response to that call for public input - the vast majority of which were in support of cosmetic pesticide legislation.

The results of that online survey showed that:

- Support for a phase-out of cosmetic pesticides on private and public properties is strong (over 70% of British Columbians)
- Support for a phase-out of cosmetic pesticides does not differ between rural and urban BC
- Support for a phase-out between BC Liberal and NDP voters is about equal
- There is a very strong appetite for alternatives to chemicals and pesticides. Three in four British Columbians are extremely or very likely to use an alternative to if provided with information and tips
- There is high awareness (76 per cent) that there may be a link between exposure to some components of cosmetic pesticides and an increased risk of some types of cancer
- A clear majority of British Columbians agree that cosmetic pesticides pose a threat to the health of the environment (72 per cent), children (69 per cent), pets (67 per cent), and to their own health (64 per cent)
- Fifty-six per cent of respondents currently applying pesticides to lawns and gardens support a phase-out

“If more than half of the people who are using cosmetic pesticides today support a phase-out, why doesn’t the provincial government introduce legislation to protect public health

and encourage the use of alternatives to chemicals and pesticides?” said Kaminsky. “By eliminating these harmful agents from our lawns, gardens, sports fields, playgrounds and recreation areas, we will be helping to prevent cancer in children and adults and we will be promoting a sustainable environment at the same time.”

To facilitate increased public participation, the Society created a special web-link at www.cancergameplan.ca where members of the public can provide their input by email, by contacting the BC Liberal and NDP leadership candidates, or by joining the Pesticide Free B.C. Facebook group.

Cosmetic pesticides are used to control unwanted weeds and plants to improve the appearance of lawns and gardens. More than 30 B.C. municipalities have adopted bylaws to ban their cosmetic use and several provinces have bans in place.

The Canadian Cancer Society is a national community-based organization of volunteers whose mission is the eradication of cancer and the enhancement of the quality of life of people living with cancer. For more about cancer, visit our website www.cancer.ca or call our toll-free, bilingual Cancer Information Service at 1 888 939-3333.

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