

# **Bid to ban cosmetic pesticides in city back on track**

By Toby Gorman - Nanaimo News Bulletin

Published: April 24, 2009 3:00 PM

The Canadian Cancer Society put a bug in the City of Nanaimo's ear on banning pesticides and council responded with \$25,000 for pesticide education and awareness.

Cancer society volunteer Kelsey O'Gorman presented city council Monday night with a petition signed by 1,200 Nanaimo residents calling for the city to adopt a bylaw banning cosmetic pesticides.

City staff, under direction of council and the city's Advisory Committee on the Environment, were asked to draft a bylaw last September and present it this month. The bylaw, which was to have been drafted over the winter, was subject to input by members of the local lawn and garden industry.

"We were concerned the deadline was passing with no action," said Adriane Schroeder, the society's community action coordinator. "This puts the bylaw development process back on track and is a great Earth Day gift for Nanaimo citizens."

Eighteen other B.C. municipalities have banned cosmetic pesticide use while Ontario and Quebec have outright bans on the use of 250 pesticide products. Port Alberni is currently in the process of drawing up its own bylaw.

"Obviously that's the direction we would like B.C. to take but it starts with municipalities," said Schroeder. "In Nanaimo, the process starts with informing and educating residents on the dangers of pesticide use and how it affects children, pets and adults."

Cosmetic pesticides refers to chemicals that are used for controlling plants and insects in lawns and gardens to enhance their appearance for non-essential reasons. Herbicides, pesticides and fungicides are all included.

The residential awareness program will educate homeowners on the dangers of pesticides and, if adopted by the city, a ban would not be implemented until April 2010 to allow residents to become educated on the subject.

Currently, the city only uses pesticides as a last resort to control a serious infestation that

poses a threat under its Integrated Pest Management System.

“While the city does make an effort to minimize it, and Nanaimo does it very well, the pesticides that are used are quite toxic,” said Schroeder.

“By implementing a ban the city is leading by example.”

Coun. Fred Pattje said the city will work with stakeholders to determine what the education programs will look like.

Cosmetic pesticide use is also becoming a provincial issue. Both the NDP and Green parties have included a provincewide ban on cosmetic pesticide use in their campaign platforms.

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