

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

**TO:** Secretary, Planning and Operations Committee  
**FROM:** Chair, Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee  
**DATE:** June 27, 2000  
**SUBJECT:** Regulation - Use of Pesticides on Properties Within the City of Saskatoon  
**FILE NO.:** CK. 4200-2

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**RECOMMENDATION:** that a report be submitted to City Council with the following recommendations:

- 1) that, in follow-up to the recommendation of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development for the phasing out of the use of most pesticides for cosmetic purposes, as outlined in the Standing Committee's recent report entitled "Pesticides: Making the Right Choice for the protection of Human Health and the Environment", City Council write to the Federal Government in support of prohibiting the use, for aesthetic purposes, of those pesticides which experts judge represent a risk to health;
- 2) that City Council petition the Provincial Government to provide specific legislative authority to City Council to prohibit, control and regulate the use of chemical herbicides and pesticides on private property within City limits;
- 3) that City Council approve, in principle, a comprehensive communications and public awareness plan regarding use of pesticides, designed and implemented through the Communications Branch and, that an expenditure of \$26,500.00 be considered by the Budget Committee for the 2001 Operating Budget; and
- 4)
  - a) that the City discontinue use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes;
  - b) that when the City finds the need to apply pesticides, signs be posted on the property warning of intent to apply pesticides at least 48 hours before applying pesticides and at least 72 hours after applying pesticides;
  - c) that parks and golf courses in which pesticides have been used in the past year display signs indicating that pesticides have been applied; and
  - d) that a list of those sites to which pesticides have been applied during the last year be made available to the public, if possible on the City's web site.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee (SEAC) has been discussing the need for advance notification and post-application signage, and restricted use of pesticides (which includes herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, etc.) on urban residential property by homeowners and commercial applicators. SEAC is concerned about the health effects of pesticide use, especially the potential impact on children and those individuals with respiratory (asthma) and chemical sensitivity health concerns. SEAC has investigated the following measures to reduce pesticide exposure:

- Posting signs in advance of pesticide application and for 3 days after application. This would allow neighbours the chance to reduce exposure by closing windows and removing children and pets from the area.
- Prohibition of application during days where wind conditions would increase the likelihood of exposure to individuals on adjacent properties.
- Restriction of pesticide application to daylight hours.

## **REPORT:**

There is a significant body of scientific evidence indicating that exposure to pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides etc.) is associated with health risks, especially in children. The Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee recommends that the City of Saskatoon play an active role in reducing potential health risks as a result of pesticide applications on public and private property in the City. Initially a campaign for voluntary compliance seems appropriate, which would subsequently be followed by the passing of a bylaw, once the public has a good understanding of the dangers and alternatives.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development has recommended the phasing out of the use of most pesticides for cosmetic purposes in their recent report entitled “Pesticides: Making the Right Choice for the Protection of Human Health and the Environment”. SEAC is recommending that City Council send a letter of support to the Federal Government in this regard.

The Committee also believes that the City should have some control regarding spraying by residents. Initially this authority could be used to require the notification of neighbors at least 48 hours before pesticides are applied, and the posting of a sign indicating a pesticide has been applied for at least 3 days following pesticide application. There should also be a restriction on application of pesticides (including herbicides) to daylight hours. This could be achieved through the passing of a bylaw by the City.

Informal enquiries to the Provincial Government gave SEAC the impression that the Provincial Government considers the City to have the authority to regulate pesticide use to protect public health, and the correspondence from the Province in this regard is attached. Based on experience with the City's legislation that restricted smoking to protect public health, the City Solicitor's Office suggested to the Committee that it would be prudent to request specific authority from the Provincial Government to regulate pesticide use to protect public health. This will improve the chances that the bylaw will withstand a challenge in the courts.

A public information campaign is needed to increase awareness of the health risks associated with pesticide exposure and to promote use of alternatives to pesticides, substitution of less toxic pesticides for more toxic ones and use of proper methods of pesticide application. SEAC has submitted a recommendation in this regard.

#### **EXISTING LEGISLATION:**

The Committee has received information from the City Solicitor's Office by report dated January 11, 2000, which outlines the existing legislation. This report is attached.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Excerpts from The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development report entitled "Pesticides: Making the Right Choice for the Protection of Human Health and the Environment".
2. Newspaper Articles outlining the issues.
3. Report of City Solicitor dated January 11, 2000 outlining existing legislation.
4. Letter dated March 31, 2000 from Mr. Stuart Kramer, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management.

**Written by:**           **Dr. Carroll Chubb**

**Approved by:**           \_\_\_\_\_

**Mr. Robert Donahue, Chair**  
**Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee**  
**Dated: July 12, 2000**

**Note:**           This report was considered by the Planning and Operations Committee at its meeting held on July 18, 2000 and referred to the Administration for a report. As of December 31, 2000, there was no report back from the Administration.

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