

Subject: Cosmetic Pesticide Bylaw

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Dear Councillors of the District Of North Vancouver,

I would like to respond to the issue of a proposed Cosmetic Pesticide ban in the Dist. of North Van based on the information in the email that is attached below from Mr. John Hunter.

Mayor Harris is exactly right, resistance to the ban is useless; it is only a matter of time. Public opinion has already shifted to banning cosmetic pesticides and reduced usage from many citizens. Anyone who doesn't agree with this statement is sadly out of tune with the grass roots feelings of our citizens. My personal experience over the last 18 years in horticulture, in private and public business, clearly indicates an overwhelming majority against pesticide use, if for no other reason than to protect our children, pets and the environment. Retailers of such products have already realized the prognosis, as they have witnessed their profits from the sale of cosmetic pesticide shrink and profits from safe organic alternatives grow.

The following statement, in my opinion, is wrong and unfairly exaggerates the issue.

This pesticide bylaw is aimed at both the customers AND the lawn care businesses – it forbids the business, practically speaking, from operating in DNV. It basically bans the business from operating in DNV UNLESS on public lands (they WILL get an exception) – there is sure to be an exemption for golf courses and parks, not so for residents, despite the platitudes.

A cosmetic pesticide ban, by the use of legislative authority, which is in line with the Community Charter, does not forbid a company from doing business, it simply regulates what can be done by said business, in the name of public safety, exactly as the anti smoking bylaws have done. Regulation for the pesticide bylaw is the same as many other building permit or development permit regulations. I suggest whoever wrote this statement should be better informed before they write such inaccuracies.

As for hypocrisy, who is trying to prevent us from stopping the use of poisons in our environment, and why? We are not talking about banning free speech; we are talking about regulating unnecessary toxic substances.

Talk about hypocrisy, as many speakers pointed out. "Natural pest control means won't work for DNV, but for you taxpayers . . ." That did NOT happen to pub owners.

Commenting that we cannot regulate, we must educate is not the way to govern for every issue. We all want our leaders to lead, not follow. Yes, any new bylaw should be combined with an education program; one cannot successfully exist without the other. Saying that a cosmetic pesticide ban on companies will cause homeowners to take up the slack and start using chemicals on their own, is out of touch with the grassroots movement. Pesticide businesses apply a substantial amount of pesticide and they are convenient for homeowners. Take away the convenience and implement education combined with legislative authority and progress will be made on both fronts.

Bylaws in other communities banning cosmetic pesticide use have produced a reduction in usage, primarily because of the threat of bylaw enforcement and the accompanying education and people understand when something is right. Is someone trying to say we should not enforce speed limits because no one will listen or that we should stop trying to educate people about drunk driving because people will still do it anyway? Rubbish! New bylaws take time to implement and education is undertaken for long-term benefit, not the immediate benefit. By the way, pesticide usage is not "socially acceptable" anymore, by those people who are educated enough to understand the issues.

Mr. Hunter's comment about earning respect and candid intelligent discussion is ironic, given some of the statements in his email. Who is he to tell us anything?

I can tell you that there are alternatives to pesticide use. I regularly advise my clients on ways to eliminate pesticide use, with excellent success and my customer's children are safer for it. Residential cosmetic pesticides are used primarily out of a need to enhance our vanity, not to protect the environment, not to grow food or to eliminate the hordes of locust. The problem is no one on the North Shore is offering an alternative to pesticides or education. The exception is the North Shore Recycling Program, which is trying to move the agenda for everyone's benefit.

If council decides that the issue needs more study, fine that is prudent, but DO NOT USE CITY STAFF ONLY TO PROVIDE YOUR DECISION MAKING INFORMATION, they are not experienced or educated in pesticide usage or the long term effects in the environment. Research institutions cannot be relied upon heavily to provide information because much of their grant money comes from chemical manufacturers. Professionals like myself can be trusted only so far, because we have already made up our minds based on years of field experience, exposure and training. Where does that leave you, as usual, listen to everyone, but make up your own mind based on what is best for our community health, be leaders as you were hired to be.

No one said a new bylaw of any type would be easy. We have to fight for every scrap of gain in our society. On the issue of scrapping, bitter, nasty or otherwise unprofessional discussion during council meetings, this is democracy, not tea time, it is never pretty and you do have to fight it out to make a gain. Anyone who thinks we should all shake each other hands and be friendly and rub each other all over to feel good, is too insulated from the realities of life in the world. Must be nice to be all warm and fuzzy everyday?

Regarding a Cosmetic Pesticide ban, Council should answer the following questions:

- 1) What is in the best interests of public safety?
- 2) Is the District of North Van. Parks department using pesticides and if yes, what is the City's liability exposure in this regard?
- 3) Why are so many people (including some of the DNV staff) opposing the regulation of cosmetic pesticides? A measure designed to protect the health of all living things, including our children.
- 4) Would the implementation of such bylaw affect businesses? If yes, to what extent? Can the impact be mitigated?
- 5) Do any perceived negative effects of such a bylaw outweigh the benefits of social progression and public health?

Maybe DNV staff could work on answering these questions?

I thank you for listening to me.

Proudly with a Clean Conscience,

Todd Major

Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2005 2:56 PM

Subject: FW: PMRA | Questions and Answers about 2,4-D

You can always count on Corrie! Great research Corrie.

[PS Mayor Harris analogy last night in Council chambers claiming resistance to the "no pesticide/herbicide bylaws" is analogous to resistance to the anti-smoking bylaws in pubs and the](#)

spectre of job in that case (which job loss did not happen) is defective, I suggest.

Those anti-smoking bylaws were aimed at the customers primarily (you can't smoke in this and that place), although enforcement devolved to some extent on the business owner. This pesticide bylaw is aimed at both the customers AND the lawn care businesses – it forbids the business, practically speaking, from operating in DNV. It basically bans the business from operating in DNV UNLESS on public lands (they WILL get an exception) – there is sure to be an exemption for golf courses and parks, not so for residents, despite the platitudes. Talk about hypocrisy, as many speakers pointed out. “Natural pest control means won't work for DNV, but for you taxpayers . . .” That did NOT happen to pub owners.

The proper analogy would be that government had banned professionally run pubs and forced people (as in prohibition days) to set up “speak-easys” as in the 1930s. And they tried in the 1930s, with the known results.

When will governments learn? You cannot stop socially acceptable things like pot, booze, and prostitution. The trick is education to make them NOT socially acceptable, not to use a stick as some would have, including C. Nixon and Crist to my disappointment. There has been lots of rhetoric but no solid evidence presented to council that they should overrule the feds, to my knowledge. Trotting out a few examples like DDT does not a solid case make.

The truly sad thing about last night's Council is a staff report which makes unsupported statements. Page 3: “This will effectively eliminate the use of many pesticides on residential properties, particularly the herbicides.” Not a shred of evidence in the report to back this up, and no rebuttal to the letter from Mr. Charles which suggests, as I read it, that the bylaws have BACKFIRED in other jurisdictions. That is, professional lawn care was replaced by amateurs like me who use far more chemicals to do the job than the licensed, trained professionals. And I can sympathize with his points – if you threaten to fine me \$10,000 as this bylaw does, I'll use weed and feed (FAR worse) rather than the bit of spot spraying I do. My lawn is not going to end up like that weed infested mess at the bottom of my street (DNV property I assume, on Dollarton) or that up and coming weed mess on the Dollarton Hwy near Maplewood.

For staff to bring this to Council without any evidence pro or con that bylaws of like nature in other cities work is VERY disappointing. In fact, when the only input (it was in the Council package at the front desk) is that the bylaws have backfired elsewhere, it is to me inconceivable that this would come to Council. Was Mr. Charles wrong or biased? Who knows? But how can this topic go unaddressed in the report?

It seems a bit of a repeat of the staff Report to Council on the Burrard agreement a week or so ago, which contained no useful summary of the issues, the history, or anything that a responsible Council member should want to know. And the agreement vote is scheduled on the same night the band has a 15 minutes delegation to Council on the Band's history; as C. Walton pointed out, how can an intelligent and candid discussion take place? We don't need this type of performance.

Please Council members, don't let this sort of thing continue. Councillor Nixon spoke of disrespect for all Council in “vitriolic” e-mails to himself re pesticides. Well, with respect, you have to earn respect and you do that partly by demanding businesslike behaviour of yourselves and staff. Accepting the “jamming” you got on Burrard and pesticides will not do it. And accepting recommendations to pass an arguably intrusive bylaw with ZERO info in the report on whether they work elsewhere will not do it.

Sincerely and with deep disappointment

John Hunter, P. Eng.

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