

Subject: FW: Lawn Care Industry

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST - THIS IS A REPRINT FROM AN UNDISCLOSED BUT RELIABLE SOURCE. IT MAY ALSO BE THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING THE DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER AND ANY OTHER MUNICIPALITY IN CANADA.

> *Subject: Lawn Care Industry*

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> *The information below is intended to highlight the fact that public policy discussion is about much more than local landscape companies and their clients. The issue of the lawn care industry's opposition to local pesticide bylaws is rapidly becoming an important case study in public policy circles. It is an excellent example of a large industry, in this case the US chemical industry, exercising very effective influence on local government policy, without being seen to be directly doing so.*

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> *There is clearly a continent-wide, highly organized, and well funded program to shut down municipal pesticide bylaws. In Canada the lead in the fight against local pesticide bylaws is "The Weed Man" which has 200 franchises in Canada, the US, and Australia. It is widely believed that the fight in Canada is quietly funded by American giants Dow, Bayer and Scotts, with whom the Weed Man has partnered in the US on anti-pesticide initiatives. These companies are overtly funding the fight against pesticide regulation in the US. In the US Dow, Bayer and The Weed Man have partnered with others on "Project Evergreen" an initiative to justify, and increase, the use of pesticides on children's sports fields, and to discredit anti-pesticide environmental groups.*

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> http://www.beyondpesticides.org/news/daily_news_archive/2004/08_31_04.htm

>
> <http://www.projectevergreen.com/links.html>

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> *The lawn care industry, especially in the United States, has organized extensive efforts to oppose local government pesticide bylaws. The efforts are largely funded by Dow, Bayer, and Scotts, all operating through non-profit lobby fronts. Dow, Scotts, and other chemical companies fund a not for profit Washington based lobby group called RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) and an associated website (which makes no mention of the funders).*

> <http://www.pestfacts.org/> On the RISE website anti-pesticide environmentalists are described the following way:

> *"Not unlike fundamentalists engaged in a jihad against unbelievers, these radical environmentalists pursue an agenda that has less to do with protection of the environment than with antipathy toward business, profits, and certain products and technologies."*
> *The use of "fundamentalists" and "jihad", is not accidental of course.*

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> *The US chemical industry is especially alarmed by the growth of pesticide control bylaws in Canada arising from the Supreme Court decision on the Town of Hudson, Quebec (*

> <http://www.post-gazette.com/pq/05024/447044.stm>). They don't want Canadian-type local bylaws spreading into the US.

> *You will notice in the articles that the lawn care industry in the US has successfully lobbied 30 US state governments for "pre-emption" laws, which strip US local governments of the right to enact pesticide bylaws. Lawn care industry conferences, particularly those in Canada,*

> have workshops, resource materials, and training sessions on how lawn
> care companies can fight municipal pesticide bylaws, normally by
> mobilizing their customer base and playing on private property rights
> concerns.

>
> I see you have been copied on Toronto's communications plan on its
> pesticide bylaw (which ultimately did not prohibit the use of
> pesticides). The lawn care industry launched a stunningly well
> organized and effective opposition to the Toronto bylaw including
> radio ads, billboards, and even lawn signs. The radio message stated
> that 'City Hall was planning to put your children at risk of West Nile
> Virus' by prohibiting the proper management of weeds and mosquito
> breeding attractants. It worked so well that the bylaw was watered
> down to the point of being meaningless. This is an interesting article
> from the industry (Weed Man again) perspective about the Toronto bylaw
> outlining their lobbying tactics.
> <http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/news/news.asp?ID=1466>

> There is a rather telling quote from the article above:

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> "The day we had 400 people in front of Toronto's City Hall marching in
> protest of the Bylaw was one of the most amazing things to see. Many
> people thought we were the activists and didn't realize that we were
> actually the industry."

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> Chemical industry fighting lawn pesticide bans with increasing success
> 2002 TORONTO (CP) - A year after the Supreme Court's landmark ruling
> allowing municipalities to ban the use of lawn pesticides, the
> chemical industry is fighting back with increasing success against the
> groundswell of public support for restricting pesticides.

> "They have regrouped," Ottawa city Coun. Alex Cullen said of those in
> the lawn-care business.

> "In many cases they have been successful in out-organizing the local
> communities."

> After Halifax city councillors passed a bylaw to gradually ban
> cosmetic pesticides by 2003, Stephen King, manager of the Halifax
> parks department, said the city received "literally hundreds" of calls
> from other Canadian municipalities asking how they could pass their
> own bylaw.

> Consultants for chemical industry groups also visited; they were hired
> to figure out where they went wrong.

> "They've learned from their losses and are using that experience to
> better defend themselves in other municipalities," King said.

> Karen Clark, an environmental health policy lawyer for Toronto Public
> Health, said the lawn-care industry's campaign is working in Toronto.

> Public meetings held on a proposed cosmetic pesticide ban held last
> week were "overwhelmed" by representatives from lawn-care companies
> sporting T-shirts, handing out pamphlets and offering quick comebacks
> to any question, she said.

> "They were giving well-informed, uniform answers. Even the landscapers
> who turned out were quoting trade law."

> There were far fewer people advocating a pesticide ban and they
> weren't nearly as well-organized, she said.

> "The presence of this big lobby group makes it easier for a whole
> bunch of people on city council who have a conservative bent anyway,
> who would really rather not get another bylaw telling people what to
> do on their own property," Clark said.

> "And there are economic interests involved and that hooks a lot of
> councillors, as well, who don't want to tie the hands of business
> owners in their wards."

> Similar campaigns have been mounted in the Ontario communities of
> Guelph, Caledon, London and Ottawa. The campaigns have stalled efforts
> to enact bylaws banning cosmetic pesticide use.

> "The chemical companies are using the same template across Ontario,"

> said Cullen.
> "They've taken on pro-environment names like the Ontario Environmental
> Coalition, hired lobbyists, written letters, made presentations and
> packed meetings."
> Loraine Van Haastreht, owner of the Mississauga-based Dr. Green
> lawn-care company, belongs to the 200 company-strong coalitions. She
> has attended public meetings across southern Ontario arguing city
> councils aren't equipped to regulate the pesticide industry.
> "Health Canada has 400 scientists looking at this issue every day and
> they have ruled time and again these products are safe. The city of
> Toronto, for example, has no staff to devote on a full-time basis,"
> she said.
> In western Canadian cities like Victoria and Edmonton, the chemical
> companies are not as active likely because those cities are making
> less aggressive moves to ban pesticides.
> Edmonton recently formed a public citizens' committee to draft a plan
> to reduce pesticide use.
> "It will likely involve a large public education campaign," said Coun.
> Michael Phair, adding a ban would be difficult to enforce and the
> chemical industry "would probably go nuts if we were talking about a
> complete ban."
> Still, groups in the city like Lawns for Kids are demanding a total
> reduction in pesticide use and people are signing up in droves for
> organic gardening classes at the Garden Institute of Alberta.
> What's becoming quite popular, said Nancy Finlayson, president of the
> institute, is a landscaping technique called naturalizing.
> "It involves planting only the local native species. Because they grow
> naturally in the wild, they don't require watering or fertilizing,"
> she said.
> A similarly holistic approach to lawns and gardens has been in vogue
> in British Columbia for years, said Dr. Michelle Gorman, the
> Integrated Pest Management Co-ordinator for the city of Victoria.
> "In the east, there is much more of a focus on the perfect, pristine
> lawn, maybe because the season you can have one is so short."
> She said after the Supreme Court ruled last year that the village of
> Hudson, Que., had the right to ban lawn pesticides, there was "a fair
> upswell" of people petitioning city council for a ban on cosmetic
> pesticide use.
> The city is working on a model bylaw that regional municipalities will
> eventually vote on. She said she said there hasn't been a big
> opposition from lawn-care companies. In fact, many lawn-care companies
> support the regulation.
> "A number of local companies make their business not using pesticides.
> The organic landscaping method is exploited all over states, and here
> too because it makes good money."
> Quebec municipalities have been the most active, with nearly 50
> municipalities imposing cosmetic pesticide bans, and the provincial
> environment minister pledging enact a province wide ban.
> Michel Gaudet, vice-president of the Coalition for Alternatives to
> Pesticides, said he has no idea why the rest of Canada is moving so
> slowly on the issue.
> He got involved after his wife and daughter developed chemical
> sensitivity from pesticide exposure, and he said others shouldn't wait
> that long.
> "Open your eyes," he said.
> The reason lawn pesticides aren't being banned more quickly, said
> Clark, is because the evidence that they are dangerous is mounting,
> but still not conclusive.
> "It's going to take a while for the toxicologists and epidemiologists
> to duke it out," she said.
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> Pesticide Users and Producers Launch Campaign to Combat Activists
> (Beyond Pesticides, September 29, 2003) A landscape industry trade
> group, spearheaded with chemical companies Dow AgroSciences, Bayer and

> Syngenta, has announced a new major campaign to educate the public
> "about the importance of healthy landscapes and green spaces." Spurred
> to respond to what it calls "coordinated activist efforts to curtail
> or even eliminate pesticides and fertilizers. . .," the Evergreen
> Foundation, which has focused on promoting and supporting greenways
> for several years, announced a reorganization in June that is now
> taking shape to campaign for "careful use of pesticides and
> fertilizers, prudent use of water, managing noise and air pollution."
> According to the Foundation, "The marketing campaign will be aimed at
> highlighting the positive economic, environmental and lifestyle
> benefits resulting from creating and maintaining health landscapes and
> green spaces."
> The companies and associations that have provided initial funding for
> this campaign are: Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA),
> Bayer Environmental Science, John Deere Worldwide Commercial &
> Consumer Equipment Division, Dow AgroSciences, GIE Media, Inc.,
> Griffin LLC, Lawn Doctor, LESCO, Syngenta, The Davey Tree Expert
> Company, The Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA),
> The Scott s Co., The Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association
> (TOCA), The Toro Co., Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), Trusty &
> Associates, Turfgrass Producers International (TPI), and Weed Man USA.
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