

Leadership Survey on Pesticide Ban Lacking Leaders

Written by Elvis Glazier

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Only one Liberal leadership candidate, Mike de Jong, has responded to a one question online poll put out by the Surrey White Rock Pesticide-Free Coalition:

“Would you support the enactment of provincial legislation banning the sale, use and application of cosmetic pesticides on private lawns and gardens, as well as public parks and recreational facilities?”

Liberal leadership candidate Mike de Jong, Dawn Black of the NDP and Jane Sterk of the Green Party were the only ones answering the one question poll: all three answered “yes.” All other Liberal leadership candidates and the Reform Party leader did not respond to the online question.

Cosmetic pesticides are pesticides (e.g., synthetic weedkiller) used for the purposes of enhancing the appearance of lawns, gardens, public parks and recreational facilities. Scientific studies show that chemical pesticides are increasingly linked to serious illness, especially leukemia, non-Hodgkins lymphoma, cancer, birth defects, learning disabilities, and fertility and neurological problems.

Across Canada, over 170 municipalities, the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, PEI, and soon Nova Scotia have enacted legislation to ban the sale, use and application of cosmetic pesticides.

“The BC government has remained silent, even with the Union of BC Municipalities 2008 motion asking the provincial government to pass provincial legislation banning the sale and use of cosmetic pesticides,” said Andrew Schulz, Coalition member. “The BC government has failed to protect the health of citizens, particularly the young and elderly, who are most at risk.”

On April 15, 2010, the Ministry posted a summary of over 8000 submitted comments: “More than 8,000 comments, signatures on petitions, or submissions were received between December 2009 and the end of February 2010 in response to the ministry’s request for comments on the cosmetic use of pesticides in BC.”

“The BC government has taken no action on a pesticide ban... although an overwhelming 88% of consultation respondents support a ban,” said Doreen Dewell, environmental science instructor. “Also, a survey completed for the Canadian Cancer Society found that 75% of British Columbians believe that pesticides have a negative impact on their health, and similar numbers are concerned about the environmental impacts of pesticides (Canadian Cancer Society Public Opinion Research Survey, 2008).”

“I’ve had too many friends diagnosed with cancer and leukemia,” said Mel Tomiyama, co-chair

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of the Coalition's research and education team. "We need the BC government to act now to prevent frivolous toxins from entering our water, air and soil. Our children deserve the same protection as other provinces. Statistics show that landscaping and other businesses thrive under such a ban. We ask British Columbians to write a letter to their local MLA, urging them to support provincial legislation banning the sale and use of cosmetic pesticides. For more information, please refer to the website www.pesticidefreebc.org