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Via Email:

Honourable Brian Pallister, Premier of Manitoba
premier@leg.gov.mb.ca

REGARDING THE USE OF COSMETIC PESTICIDES

Dear Premier Palliser;

As the year wraps up and we look to celebrating families, there is no better time to reaffirm protection of children's health from toxic chemicals where they live and play. Among many contributors to cancer, pesticides used to kill plants (herbicides) are linked with [childhood leukemia](#) as well as [a range of cancers](#) including in hormone-sensitive tissues such as the breast, prostate and testes. In Manitoba, recent research demonstrated that [lymphoid leukemia in youngsters increased steadily at 1.4% every year from 1984 to 2013](#).

Protection of children from herbicides was strengthened in 2015 when the Manitoba Non-Essential Pesticide Use Regulation (MR 286/2014) restricted herbicide use on lawns, school grounds, daycares, hospitals, and playing fields, to [federally-approved safer products](#). Similar to other provinces including Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI, property owners and lawn care providers can use only provincially-approved herbicides such as the iron-based Fiesta, corn gluten meal, bio-pesticides and contact herbicide products. There are exemptions for gardens, golf courses, agricultural and forestry, and the control of noxious, poisonous or invasive plants. Of note, many jurisdictions extend restrictions to pesticides that kill insects as well, as seen in [Ontario's extensive list of lower risk biopesticides](#).

After a mere two years, the Manitoba Pesticide Ban came under review in April 2017, with some property owners and lawn care providers claiming that the permitted chemicals are ineffective and prohibitively expensive. In fact, Health Canada requires proof that pesticides work before they can be registered for sale and use. In terms of a true cost estimate, many soil tests and supplements could be applied, least-toxic herbicides applied, and weeds pulled, with the money to treat one child with leukemia – and that is only one condition linked to pesticides.

Pesticide ingredients and degradation products may interfere with hormone signaling. The endocrine system orchestrates development, metabolism, reproduction, immunity, maturation and aging – from conception to death. [Endocrine disruption](#) happens at levels of exposure that may be inhaled or absorbed during spraying, by a toddler rolling in the grass and sucking fingers, or even on [dust](#) drifting through windows and tracked in on shoes and paws of pets in homes where the products were not used. The impact of pesticides is widespread and diverse, including for example [antibiotic resistance](#).

Parents, educators, health professionals, and environmentalists see that using least-toxic options for pest control is important for human and environmental health. The science is strengthening, that [pesticides are connected to diseases](#) such as cancer, birth defects, reproductive dysfunction, autism, behavioural

disorders, autoimmune disease, diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, and asthma. The international Endocrine Society advocates a [new scientific paradigm for action](#). The ethical and precautionary approach is to recognize today's strong scientific signals of harm, as well as the need for broad actions to address escalating diseases in Manitobans.

Federal registration of a pesticide denotes acceptable risk when the product is used according to the label – not that it is “safe,” as we all would hope. There are many [limitations to the assessment process](#), and decisions are based largely on [industry research that can be biased and drives the research agenda to obscure hazards and risks](#).

Clearly, strong actions are needed on potential contributors to cancer. In order to turn the tide of childhood cancers and protect public health. We urge the Manitoba government to uphold restrictions on the cosmetic use of herbicides. As well, further gains for human and environmental health are possible by extending restrictions to insecticides as in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia.

We would be happy to provide further information and to assist in this matter. We thank you for your consideration, and look forward to your reply.

Respectfully submitted,

Sincerely,

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