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## Surrey should endorse call for pesticide ban

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What's black and white and green all over? A call from Kwantlen Polytechnic University students for Surrey to ban cosmetic use of pesticides and herbicides on residential properties.

Oddly, Surrey council – which, in recent years, has reinvented itself as a kinder, greener government with the installation of enviro-savvy Mayor Dianne Watts at the helm – has essentially pooh-poohed the idea.

The six Kwantlen students appearing before council Monday afternoon are part of the university's Environmental Technology Program. Collectively, they've named themselves LEEP (Love our Environment – Eliminate Pesticides), and they want Surrey councillors to ban the use of pesticides on home lawns and gardens.

It doesn't require a leap in logic to accept that unnecessary use of chemicals in the environment has a negative trickle-down effect on ecology. Insects, fish and small animals – not to mention water sources and the neighbour's children – can all suffer from contamination.

Yet, despite a plethora of facts outlining the ill health effects of exposure to garden poisons, a petition with more than 1,000 signatures in support of LEEP's proposal, polls showing 74 per cent support from residents, and the backing of the Canadian Cancer Society, council was unmoved.

Instead of directing staff to come back with a bylaw, Surrey lobbed the notion back to the Environmental Advisory Committee, which already looked at the issue on Oct. 17 of last year. Its take on things? Apparently pesticide use is so far off the city's radar, nobody could remember. (According to minutes of the meeting, no recommendations were made).

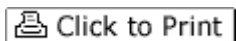
Frankly, a ban of this nature is a no-brainer. It wouldn't restrict the sale of pesticides (or impact the businesses that sell them). It would simply create a recourse for reining in indiscriminate – and often, uneducated – use of chemicals in our green spaces.

Several other municipalities – including Vancouver – have enacted such bans. The Surrey School District no longer uses pesticides on school properties.

By waffling on this one, Surrey council is muddying a black-and-white issue.

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