

Hello. My name is Julie Bard and I am here representing the **Canadian Cancer Society, Markham/Whitchurch-Stouffville Unit**. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to the Committee this evening.

Before I begin, I would like to commend you for holding such a forum. This is a very important and often complex issue and we're pleased to see the City of Markham moving toward a strong bylaw on the cosmetic use of pesticides.

I will be very brief.

Some pesticides have been linked to a variety of illnesses, including cancer. Some of the chemicals used in pesticides are known to be carcinogenic, or cancer causing.

In some cases, evidence linking pesticides and cancer will not be scientifically *definitive*, but in many cases it is *suggestive*. And the amount and quality of the research is growing. Much of the research on the association between pesticides and cancer has focused on occupational exposures. It is possible that vulnerable populations, such as children and people with weak immune systems, may be at higher risk. Surely we have an obligation to protect them from any possible risks caused by exposure to pesticides.

Based on the most credible research available, the Canadian Cancer Society is very concerned about the use of potentially carcinogenic or cancer-causing substances for the purpose of enhancing the appearance of private gardens, lawns, parks and recreational facilities. This type of usage is commonly referred to as *ornamental* or *cosmetic* use of pesticides.

In these instances, we believe that appropriate action should be taken to limit the risk to human health. This is especially true when the reason for using pesticides on lawns is to prevent weeds and plants that can be removed in other potentially less damaging ways.

Since the ornamental use of pesticides has no countervailing health benefit -- and has the potential to *cause* harm -- we call for a ban on the use of pesticides on lawns and gardens.

The Canadian Cancer Society has been active in a number of different ways throughout the Province in promoting this position. We have provided deputations in support of municipal pesticide free bylaws and are happy to provide materials and other forms of support. The Society has also been an open participant in the widespread media debate about the use of pesticides. We also have information about pesticides, alternatives and ways to reduce risk on our website at cancer.ca, in printed materials, and through our toll-free *Cancer Information Service*.

To put it at its most basic level, the Canadian Cancer Society feels it's better to be *safe than sorry*. To limit exposure now, rather than possibly face illness later.

If there is a threat of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken, even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. As a result, we are calling for a ban on the application of cosmetic pesticides.

I am not here tonight to debate the scientific merit of our position. I am here as a spokesperson representing our organization's position. In the case of pesticide use, each of us has the ability to choose to either ignore possible dangers or we can avoid this potential risk factor for developing cancer.

The Canadian Cancer Society, and I personally, encourage you to pass the strongest bylaw possible.

Thank you.