

Urgent Message To All BC Golfers

BC's provincial government is considering new legislation prohibiting the sale of pesticides for "cosmetic" use... including on golf courses. A bipartisan special committee has been struck to gather information and make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on how to proceed on this issue. To date there has been significant input from groups on both sides of but very little input from individual golfers. It is important that golfers understand what is at stake here and what could happen to our province's golf courses if pesticide use on them is deemed to be cosmetic and disallowed...

WHAT TURF DAMAGE CAN BE EXPECTED WITHOUT USE OF PESTICIDES

According to the "Western Canada Turfgrass Association" (WCTA), there are diseases and insect activity that, left untreated, can kill turfgrass in as little as 24 hours. Also, they say that without the use of fungicides (which are pesticides) snow mold would kill much of the turfgrass on putting greens, tees, and fairways every winter, leaving the golf course with unplayable conditions and costly repairs. For snow covered courses, turfgrass managers could anticipate, on average, that it would take until mid-June to get back to industry standard playing conditions. For those golf courses in more temperate climates, snow mold has similar potential to do turfgrass damage throughout the whole year if left unchecked.

WHAT ECONOMIC DAMAGE CAN BE EXPECTED WITHOUT USE OF PESTICIDES

While no definitive impact can be determined before it happens, it is a guarantee that golf industry revenues, tourism industry revenues and government tax revenues associated with golf would decline significantly without the use of pesticides. Below are a few stats about the current economic impact of golf (courtesy NAGA-BC)

- Golf contributes over \$4 billion in gross production annually and employs nearly 50,000 people in BC.
- Tax revenue from golf exceeds \$400 million annually
- Each year there are over 25,000 charitable events at golf courses in the province.
- Over 6,000,000 rounds of golf are played in BC each year.

WHAT IS THE ACTUAL IMPACT OF PESTICIDE USE WHEN USED ON GOLF COURSES

First, it should be understood that there is existing legislation covering pesticide use. It mandates following "Integrated Pest Management" (IPM) practices which includes application of pesticides only by provincially licensed professionals and only when conditions make it absolutely necessary. Instead, turf is preferentially managed wherever possible using water management, topdressing, aerifying, and mowing practices to maintain acceptable playing conditions. As far as how dangerous the pesticides that are being currently used actually are, according to the WCTA, "Health Canada and the professional scientists at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) are already doing what is necessary to protect all the citizens of Canada equally through the current, very stringent, legislation on pesticides. In particular the PMRA has indicated that all pesticides used in the golf industry are the most stringently tested and rigorously regulated products and pose no unacceptable risk to human health and the environment when used according to manufacturers' directions."

WHAT CAN YOU DO ?

BEFORE December 16th:

- The special committee has invited all to participate in the consultation by completing an on-line questionnaire.

Go to www.leg.bc.ca/pesticidescommittee and take the five minutes to make your point of view known. Make sure to indicate that you want golf course pesticide use NOT to be considered "cosmetic".

AFTER December 16th:

Contact your MLA via email and make them aware of your point of view on this issue.

FINALLY, FORWARD THIS EMAIL TO ALL YOUR GOLFING FRIENDS / ACQUAINTANCES SO THEY ARE AWARE OF THIS ISSUE.