



**Manitoba
Association of
School
Business
Officials**



September 6, 2016

Manitoba Sustainable Development
Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Consultation 2016
200 Saulteaux Crescent
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3W3

On behalf of the public school boards in Manitoba we, the Manitoba Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) and the Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA), would like to thank Manitoba Sustainable Development for the opportunity to submit our perspectives in conjunction with the 2016 Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Consultation.

How the Ban Impacts School Divisions

In 2014, the Province of Manitoba established *The Non-Essential Pesticide Use Regulation* (M.R. 286/2014), which effectively led to implementation of the said ban. According to announcements published by the Government both prior to and following implementation, the rationale for this new regulatory framework focused on the health and wellbeing of members of our communities, including and especially children. As such, MASBO and MSBA applaud any and all efforts undertaken by the Province to safeguard and protect our students and their families.

The implementation of the regulation has however, introduced some important challenges across the public education sector, in terms of limitations upon divisional administration to apply pesticides and herbicides on school properties as these may be required. In turn, this impacts the ability of school divisions to successfully maintain their school grounds for satisfaction of local community uses that tend to occur on these sites, whether this community use is school or non-school related.

We wish to be clear that practices across school divisions in Manitoba do vary to some degree. While there are some school divisions that were not impacted by the establishment of the pesticide ban in 2014, many school divisions have voiced concern over the limitation of using select substances and mandated practices according to provisions of *The Non-Essential Pesticide Use Regulation*.

Our Position and Perspectives

In view of the concerns of our members, MASBO and MSBA would like to clarify our position on use of cosmetic pesticides on school properties, with some key recommendations. Our intention in doing so is to achieve a careful balance between the promotion of health and wellbeing for our students, their families, and our communities at a universal level, while also enabling use of herbicide and pesticide substances as required.

Principal Recommendations

Recommendation 1: MASBO and MSBA would advocate that Health Canada standards and regulations may be used by the Province of Manitoba to ensure that all products remain safe and will not have adverse human or environmental impacts.

It is our understanding that the Government of Manitoba does not conduct its own scientific research on the safety of pesticide or herbicide products, while the Government of Canada does so prior to approval of such products. By referencing approved products under the *Pest Control Products Act (Canada)* and other federal regulatory frameworks, Manitoba may ensure that a wider array of pesticide and herbicide products become available for corporate use in treating noxious weeds and pests in Manitoba, while also being assured of community health and safety through the federal product approval process.

Recommendation 2: MASBO and MSBA would also encourage that all corporate entities, whether school divisions or other entities operating in our communities, employ only licensed applicators when applying herbicide or pesticide products, as a mandated practice by the Province of Manitoba.

As a measure that is specifically mandated under the Manitoba School Insurance Program, which pertains to all public school properties in Manitoba, MASBO and MSBA believe that providing for the more universal employment of licensed applicators will ensure that regulated and safe practices are used when applying pesticide and herbicide products. This measure also tends to a careful balance between the health and safety of all communities and the requirement to address encroachments from noxious weeds and pests, both on and off school properties.

General Practices

While the following general practices are not impacted by any existing Provincial regulations, we wish to make Manitoba Sustainable Development aware that, when products are applied on school properties, any applications must have public notice of substances applied and potential hazards. School divisions are required to formally notify school families and community members of applications and to this end, signage is typically erected near affected areas indicating all product(s) applied to that area.

All products used by school divisions must be stored as per manufacturers' recommendations, preferably in a separate storage container. These general practices are mandated under the Manitoba School Insurance Program and represent best practices for promotion of health and safety for our staff, students, and members of the community. While we do not specifically recommend that such practices become policy for the entire province, we are of the perspective that this information may prove of some use or benefit to Manitoba Sustainable Development under the present consultation process.

Language matters

Finally, it is our perspective that certain provisions included under *The Non-Essential Pesticide Use Regulation* tend to unduly prohibit the application of products by school divisions where there may be compelling analogous circumstances under a given exception. In these cases, the language used within the regulation can be either too circumscriptive or too exclusionary.

As examples of where this occurs, we highlight that, by specifying the exact use of speciality turf (for lawn bowling, cricket and tennis) and fields (by professional teams or for internationally sanctioned events), these regulated exceptions become exclusionary. Were such exceptions not as precise, they would serve to enable school divisions to address the specific circumstances and contexts of the public education sector, where speciality turf can be used for a variety of track and field purposes other than for "lawn bowling, cricket or tennis" and where our fields are frequently used for sporting events by local community teams that may not be designated as "professional" or for games that may not be "internationally sanctioned".

Recommendation 3: Under any herbicide or pesticide product framework that may exist either now or into the future, MASBO and MSBA would encourage inclusion of language that will serve to recognize the varied uses of turf and fields within our sector, for purposes of promoting application of products to such areas.

Closing

In closing, we would like to again thank Manitoba Sustainable Development for the opportunity to communicate our priorities and recommendations concerning use of herbicide and pesticide substances in Manitoba. On behalf of MASBO and MSBA, each of which represents a critical partner in providing leadership and support to the cause of public education in Manitoba, we look forward to the outcomes of this important consultation process. We ask that you not hesitate to contact us, if we can be of further assistance in clarifying the above priorities and recommendations.

Sincerely,



Ken Cameron
President, MSBA

Anita Werbowski
President, MASBO

Cc. Honourable Ian Wishart, Minister of Education & Training
Bramwell Strain, Deputy Minister, Manitoba Education & Training