

## **Pesticide ban passes city council vote**

*Last Updated: Tuesday, July 15, 2008 CBC*

Hours of debate did not help clear the air, as Calgary city council voted on some convoluted amendments to move ahead on a ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides. Council instructed administration on Tuesday to develop a draft bylaw by October 2009, but it's unclear what it will cover.

The vote was split into six parts, as some of the aldermen behind the motion argued against including a clause that would have exempted lawn care companies from any pesticide restrictions. By removing that section, the aldermen essentially also voted down exemptions for agriculture, forestry and health reasons and rejected public input on who should be governed by any potential bylaw.

In a public hearing last month, golf courses and landscaping professionals asked to be exempt from any restrictions, saying they would put them out of business. The council meeting on the issue began on Monday evening and continued on Tuesday afternoon.

Ald. Joe Connelly said council wasted its time getting involved in an area that is beyond its jurisdiction and mandate. He said that the city should rely on Health Canada's science to determine the safety of pesticides for cosmetic use.

"I am looking for science. I am looking for someone to say there is a definitive link here," he said, arguing that the city should follow the lead of Health Canada, which has found most pesticides can be used safely.

"I think there's an agenda to ram this through," said Connelly. "Regardless, I think you saw in there today the death of common sense, the death of science."

### **About 135 municipalities have similar bans**

But those who believe the restricted use of the chemicals is better for health reasons said council's vote was a step forward.

"We'll still need to see what council comes up with when it comes back in a detailed way. The fact it's going ahead is a big victory," said Gideon Forman, executive director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, which lobbied council for the cosmetic-use ban.

"It's a big victory for kids. It's a big victory for pets. It's a big victory for Calgary's drinking water."

The draft bylaw will be based on a June report to Calgary's standing policy committee on utilities and environment, which had the city phasing out the cosmetic use of pesticides on public lands by 2010, and private land by 2011.

About 135 Canadian municipalities have similar bans in place, but it's debatable how successful they have been. A CBC Marketplace investigation in 2007 found pesticide products that were illegal to use in a community was still easily purchased in major stores.