



May 6, 2008

Executive Policy Committee
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB R3B 1B9

Re: Pesticide Management Bylaw

Dear Committee Members:

We are concerned that the proposed pesticide management bylaw, while well intended, could have negative ramifications for Winnipeg's restaurant industry. We recognize that there is public concern about non-essential pesticide exposure. However, we feel that the proposed bylaw may be going further than was originally intended when the issue was first brought up for discussion.

The requirement for every business to post a sign indicating outdoor commercial pesticide use could mislead the public and lead to unnecessary alarm. During the debate over this proposed bylaw, we ask that you keep the following scenarios in mind.

Simply put, a sign on the door of a restaurant would provoke a different reaction from customers than almost any other business. Customers visiting a bank or retail store would likely notice a pesticide sign, but their decision whether or not to conduct their regular business there would probably not be affected. However, when considering where to have a meal, a pesticide warning sign could quickly turn a customer away from a foodservice establishment.

Many foodservice establishments take a proactive approach to pest control by having regular monthly inspections and treatments performed. Their goal is to prevent a potential problem before it becomes a reality, which in many cases means using pesticide treatments outside to prevent the pests from moving inside. For those who have been involved in the debate over this bylaw about pesticide control in general, there is an understanding that there is a major difference between taking preventative steps and actually having a pest issue. However, we are concerned that inadequate notification and understanding could easily encourage a false sense of hysteria and confusion amongst our customers.

In effect, the city would be penalizing a business for taking the extra steps to ensure their property is free of pests, while at the same time allowing businesses who do not take these measures to continue business as usual.

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The highly-competitive restaurant industry depends on customers feeling secure in our establishments, and wanting to return. When presented with an unwelcoming sign at the doorway informing our customers that a pesticide has recently been used in the area, customers can easily jump to incorrect conclusions about the situation, and have the option to simply turn and walk away.

It is our understanding that the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services has recommended the size and contents of the sign that commercial applicators must use. If the Executive Policy Committee ultimately decides to endorse this new bylaw, we would ask that the city provide us and other members of the business community with an opportunity to provide feedback on the sign that will be posted on our properties. A clear understanding of the circumstances surrounding any pesticide use is critical if this bylaw is to succeed and not hurt local businesses.

We also request that the city be very clear and specific about which chemicals are considered "non-essential", and this information be communicated to the public to ensure their understanding that using a pesticide program does not always mean that there is a existing problem on a property.

We recognize that this bylaw has been worked on for many months, but would ask that before any new regulations are adopted, that every precaution is taken to ensure that the positive intentions are not overshadowed by negative side effects. We would be happy to work with city officials on the development of any signage or other materials to ensure that our customers are given accurate and timely information.

Sincerely,





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