

Statement in Response to the Govt of NB's report on GLYPHOSATE, issued today

July 29, 2016

Council of Canadians – Kent County and Fredericton chapters

Today the Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), Dr. Jennifer Russell, released the long-awaited [Results of the OCMOH Action Plan on Glyphosate: A report prepared for the Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health](#), dated July 26, 2016.

A careful skim of the information compiled in this report does not lead one to the published conclusion that there is no risk. Throughout this report it is clear that many jurisdictions are in the midst of review regarding these herbicide compounds. A prime example is that, due to many concerns, the federal public service PMRA (Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency) has extended its current review to 2017. It is important to note that the PMRA is still recovering from a ban on science that conflicted with political policy, which was instituted by the previous federal government. The report also highlights that other jurisdictions with less resources are taking a wait-and-see approach.

For New Brunswick to conclude that there is no risk is premature. In fact, the report only says there is no evidence of increased risk of cancer for those working in the forestry spray industry. It is also important to note that this report released today does not address the many risks associated with the many other scientifically-highlighted concerns about glyphosate herbicide compounds.

Our preliminary glance at this report reinforces for us that there is an urgent need to implement the Precautionary Principle affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada in the Hudson QC case in 2001. There is enough to be worried about that many jurisdictions are in questioning mode. New Brunswick must immediately take action to “push the pause” button on use of this substance where it is most widely used, in the forestry industry. To fail to do this now could increase the government's risk of liability for related hazards and risks as they become apparent in the next few years. This responsibility accords with the ethical issue of the government's Duty of Care to the residents of the province.

We are distressed that it was released to the media PRIOR to us being sent a copy. It was the Kent County chapter of the Council of Canadians that initiated this report by request to CMOH Dr. Cleary in August 2015, before she was fired with no cause. However, we are well aware of the politics of the situation. We can only imagine the release of this document was carefully planned by those government-corporate lobbyists who wanted it buried. They may have hoped to accomplish that through denying us the opportunity to make a fully formed response. As well, the capacity to respond is restricted by releasing it on Friday the 29th, before a long weekend: we can see that the report was published on August 26, which would have allowed for an earlier release.

We will issue further comment when we have had the opportunity to carefully review the report.

Ann Pohl, Chairperson, Kent County chapter, Council of Canadians