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Dear sir or Ms, (or organization)

I am writing to seek your support on an issue which is very important to the health of Saskatchewan children.

Saskatchewan uses 36 % of all pesticides used in Canada. Many of these are used in crop production, while others are used for cosmetic purposes, to control weeds in our lawns, keep gravel areas vegetation free in school yards, and similar purposes.

Scientific evidence that exposure to pesticides affects our health is mounting. Last April the Ontario College of Family Physicians released a comprehensive pesticide review which shows “consistent links to serious illnesses such as cancer, reproductive problems and neurological diseases, among others. ...an association exists between pesticide exposure and leukemia.” The study also shows that children are particularly vulnerable to insecticides and herbicides used on lawns, fruit trees and gardens, and for indoor control of insects and “uncovered a remarkable consistency of findings of nervous system effects of pesticide exposures.” According to the College, the implication of pesticides in the development of leukemia “warrants further investigation and also, political action.” This study is available at the College’s website, www.ocfp.on.ca.

Children are especially vulnerable because they are smaller, and rapidly growing. They are active in parks and playgrounds, and often may be barefoot or wear shorts, allowing skin contact. Children will absorb the pesticide through their skin. After application of pesticides, residues are still on the vegetation and readily absorbed for a number of days. Based on their review, the Ontario College of Family Physicians has recommended that people take steps to reduce their exposure, and that physicians advocate reduced pesticide use.

The Government of Saskatchewan is developing a Strategy for a Green and Prosperous Economy. We encourage Saskatchewan Environment to include steps to reduce children’s exposure to pesticides in the Green Strategy. These steps could include:

- * a ban or restrictions on **chemical insecticides, herbicides, fungicides (pesticides)** use in areas heavily used by children including day-cares, school yards, sports fields and playgrounds,
- * the publication of pamphlets and their distribution at medical clinics encouraging parents to reduce their children’s exposure to pesticides around home, and
- * the establishment of an office of organic agriculture and gardening.

When Saskatchewan Environment brings recommendations on the Strategy for a Green and Prosperous Economy to the government before Christmas, we ask that, using the precautionary principle, it provide for a significant reduction in pesticide exposure to our children.

Yours Sincerely,
Paule Hjertaas

TAKE ACTION: Please write to Saskatchewan Environment asking that at least these steps to reduce pesticide exposure to children be included in their Green strategy.