

OPINION

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To spray or not to spray

Town councillors will have one less choice to make in the future thanks to a decision by the Ontario government to introduce a province-wide ban on the sale and cosmetic use of pesticides.

On Monday, Premier Dalton McGuinty's Liberal party announced it would keep an election promise to introduce legislation making Ontario's pesticide rules among the toughest in North America. A province-wide ban—which isn't expected to come into effect until the spring of 2009—would supercede all existing municipal bylaws, making the rules the same throughout Ontario.

The pesticide ban would not affect the farming or forestry industries and golf courses would still be able to apply pesticides with some limitations to minimize environmental impact.

Pesticides will also still be used for health and safety, such as controlling mosquitoes, which can carry diseases like West Nile virus.

"Many municipalities have already shown leadership in banning or restricting cosmetic-use pesticides. We're extending that protection to all families wherever they live," said Ontario's Environment Minister John Gerretsen.

Quebec is currently the only Canadian province with a pesticide ban in place.

To ban pesticides has been an annual controversy in Halton Hills.

According to the provincial government, studies by public health experts are showing growing evidence of the potential health risk of pesticides, particularly for children. Both the Ontario College of Family Physicians and the Canadian Cancer Society have been calling for a ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides as a prudent measure to protect family health.

According to the province, more than 44 per cent of Ontarians already live in a municipality where the cosmetic use of pesticides is banned.

Halton Hills councillors have edged closer to joining that club in recent years, adopting a "pesticide use as a last resort" policy on Town-owned lands. However, council have avoided forcing the hand of private property owners.

Now it looks as though that contentious decision has been taken out of their hands altogether.

What do you think?

Below are the results of our most recent online poll. For the current poll go to www.independentfreepress.com

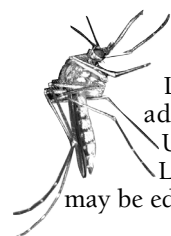
Did you take part in the Halton Hills 20-Minute Makeover on Friday or Halton Hills Clean Up Day on Saturday?

Yes (59%)

No (41%)

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published.

Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reaction to GreenCart 'discouraging'

Dear editor,
I read the letters in Wednesday's paper regarding the GreenCart program, and I'm surprised by the reaction of some of the residents of the region.

I was particularly discouraged by the Grade 7 student who couldn't be bothered to make an effort for her future. However, I take comfort in knowing that she is among the minority and if our neighbourhood is any indication, the people of Halton Region do care and they are willing to step up and make a difference.

My husband and I have been recycling, composting (we have three backyard composters) and doing what we can to reduce our garbage for years. The addition of the GreenCart now allows us to compost the last little bit of food scraps that couldn't go into our regular backyard compost bins. We are hard-pressed to generate even a third of a garbage bag worth of garbage every two

weeks from our family of three (and three pets) and we are proud of the fact that we take a bit of our time to make a difference on the impact we are having on the environment. If Halton Region were to accept cat litter and dog waste into the green cart, as they do where our son lives in Guelph, our garbage would be reduced even further. I know that we've been told there is a concern regarding germs, but if it's working in Guelph, why not here?

In answer to the question "What goes in the garbage?" my answer would be hopefully very little if anything at all!

Finally, in closing I would like to encourage everyone, whether or not you live in the townhouses and apartments that have been told they can't participate in the GreenCart program, to let your voice be heard.

Earth Week is the week of April 18-26. Do your part by picking up the phone or e-mailing your council-

lor and letting them know that by denying those people access to the program they are impacting all of us in Halton Region.

Linda Kittmer, Georgetown

Homeowners putting out bulk waste too early

Dear editor,
As new homeowners and relatively new residents to Georgetown, we appreciate the bulk waste collection that occurs here. What we do not appreciate is other homeowners' practices regarding bulk waste collection. Is it really necessary to place your bulk waste at the roadside two or three weeks before pick-up day?

For weeks, everyone, including visitors and potential future residents of Georgetown, has to look at it. Furthermore, many people do not bundle the waste correctly (or at all) or they place non-acceptable items out. When this waste does not get picked up, it then stays at the roadside for a few more weeks, continuing to make Georgetown look dump.

Please have some respect for the town and your neighbours as you utilize the bulk waste collection system; don't put the garbage out so soon and clean up what doesn't get taken. And if the Town really wants to earn some additional revenue, perhaps they should fine those who put the bulk waste out too early or those who don't clean it up when it doesn't get collected.

Doreen and Scott Calder, Georgetown

Opposers of GreenCart are just plain lazy

Dear editor,
Wow aren't many of our letter writers lazy? It seems it is so much easier to just throw everything in the garbage than to take the required two or three extra steps to place our recyclables in those little bins.

One young reader doesn't want her "doggy-doo" outside her house. Another older gentleman thinks he may need "serious surgery" if he must cut down his cardboard. What,

is he using a chainsaw? And he compares us to "A war zone in Baghdad"?

Granted, our new waste management system has had less than a smooth start, but are we really so apathetic? Our esteemed letter writers probably were allowed to have second chances during their own trials.

I think they are just plain lazy!
Josh Crocker, Georgetown