

# **Ontario-Wide Support for Municipal By-laws Restricting Pesticides**

## **KEY FINDINGS**

**from an Ontario-wide poll regarding reducing cosmetic pesticide-use  
performed by Oraclepoll Research Ltd. for the Toronto Environmental Alliance.**

October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2001

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## Methodology

### Study Sample:

- A total of 625 interviews were conducted of a randomly selected sample of Ontario residents who were 18 years of age and older.
- The percentage sample breakdown by region is as follows:

<b>Metropolitan Toronto</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>905 Belt</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Southwestern</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Eastern</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Northern &amp; Central</b>	<b>20% (10% each)</b>

### Survey Method:

- Telephone interviews (and telephone interview appointments) using computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) techniques were employed.
- A minimum of 30% of all interviews were monitored and the management of Oraclepoll Research Ltd supervised 100%.

### Logistics:

- The survey was conducted between September 9<sup>th</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup> 2001. Telephone interviews were conducted between 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Telephone appointment interviews were attempted with those respondents who were busy or not able to respond to the initial phone interview. Callbacks of busy numbers and no-answers were made up to four times. If no contact was made after four attempts, the number was discarded.

### Confidence:

- The margin of error for a 625-person sample of this nature is +/- 3.9%, 19/20 times.

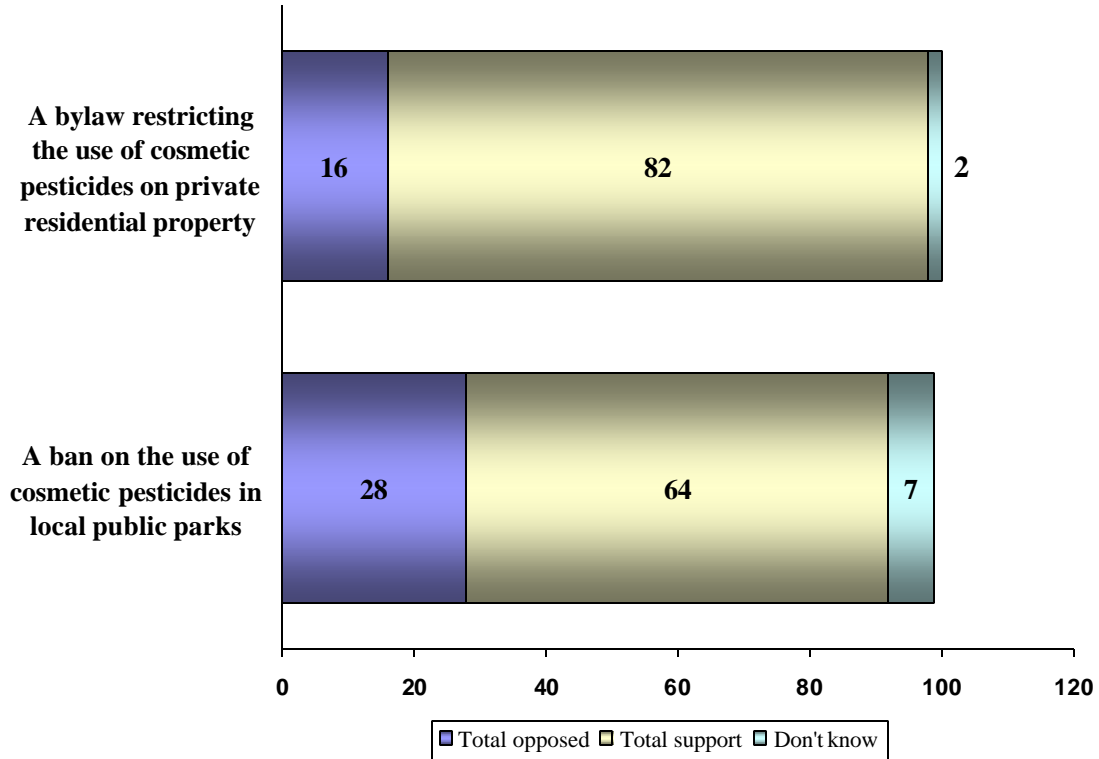
### Reporting Notes

- The results contained in this report are in aggregate format and protect the identity of individual respondents. This is in accordance with strict industry guidelines as set out by the Professional Marketing Research Society (PMRS) in “The Rules of Conduct and Good Practice (Chapter A: General Rules for Members, Section 2.5).”
- This report contains an executive summary section that highlights the key findings from the survey. The results are then presented in the exact order that the questions were asked to respondents in the survey.
- Results from open-ended probes were content analyzed and grouped in general categories.

# Executive Summary

## Support for Restrictions and Bans

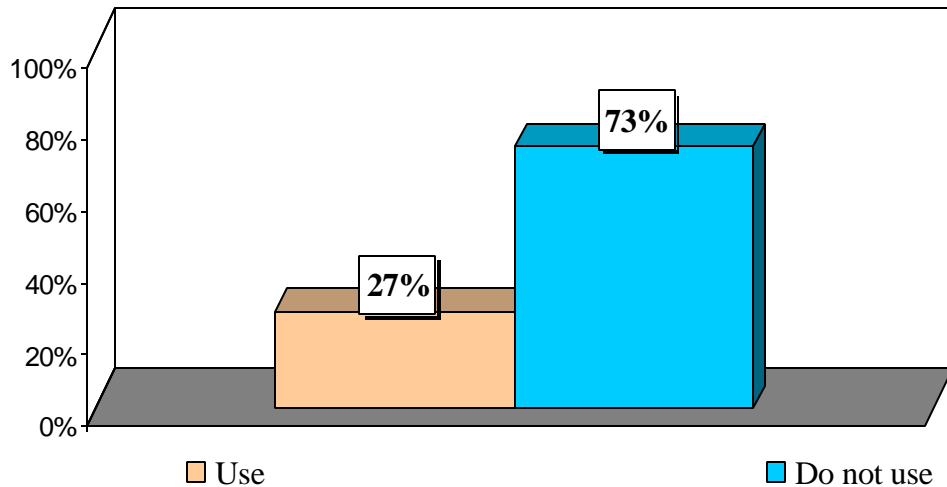
There was significant support for bylaws restricting the use of cosmetic pesticides on private residential property, and for bans on cosmetic pesticides use in local public parks.



75% of those supporting a bylaw do so because they feel that pesticides are harmful to the environment or health.

## Use of Cosmetic Pesticides

A total of 27% of Ontario residents stated that they currently use cosmetic pesticides while 73% do not.



When past users were asked why they no longer use cosmetic pesticides, 31% cited health concerns or hazards, 34% claimed that it was harmful to the environment, and 20% no longer required them.

## Discontinuing Use of Pesticides

When current and past cosmetic pesticide users were asked if they would stop using cosmetic pesticides if they were provided information on alternative methods of having a weed free lawn, 76% claimed they would be very likely to consider stop using them and 21% would be somewhat likely. There were no respondents that were not likely and 3% did not know.

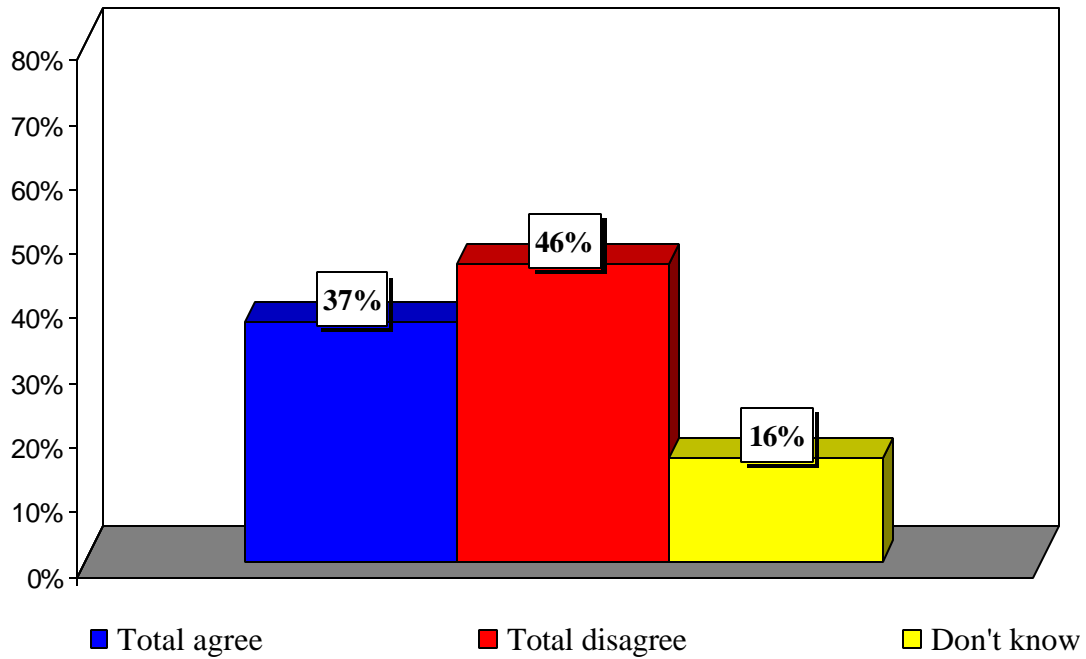
1 in 10 households surveyed stated that someone at their residence had asked another person in their neighborhood to stop using or spraying chemicals on their lawn, trees or garden.

## Product Testing

There is not a high degree of trust (37%) with the level of federal and provincial government testing that cosmetic pesticides undergo.

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the following statement that related to their perception of testing of cosmetic pesticides.

*I feel that cosmetic pesticides have undergone extensive federal and provincial government testing for safety and effectiveness.*



## Results by Question

### Support for Restrictions and Bans

Respondents were asked the following questions and responded as recorded.

*Would you say that you strongly support, somewhat support, strongly oppose or somewhat oppose a bylaw restricting the use of cosmetic pesticides on private residential property?*

Strongly oppose	9%
Somewhat oppose	7%
Somewhat support	35%
Strongly support	47%
Don't know	2%

*And would you say that you strongly support, somewhat support, strongly oppose or somewhat oppose a ban on the use of cosmetic pesticides in local public parks?*

Strongly oppose	16%
Somewhat oppose	12%
Somewhat support	23%
Strongly support	41%
Don't know	7%

Respondents who were in support of a bylaw restricting the use of cosmetic pesticides on private residential property were asked the following question and responded as recorded.

*Can you tell me why you feel this way?*

<b>Harmful to the environment / water</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Health hazard</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Too dangerous / dangerous</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Harmful to pets / animals</b>	<b>9%</b>
There are alternatives	5%
<b>Harmful to children</b>	<b>5%</b>
Not necessary	4%
Use should be restricted	4%
Don't know	4%
Grass is not that important to use chemicals on	3%
<b>Pollution</b>	<b>2%</b>
Should use natural methods	2%
Not a total ban	2%
<b>Harmful over time / long term effects</b>	<b>1%</b>
It does help kill the weeds / not effective	1%

**Respondents who were opposed to a bylaw restricting the use of cosmetic pesticides on private residential property were asked the following question and responded as recorded.**

*Can you tell me why you feel this way?*

Government should not intervene	29%
Up to the individual	19%
Don't know	13%
Everyone has the right to use it	12%
I want a nice lawn	12%
Controls the weeds	9%
Not harmful	6%

### **Use of Cosmetic Pesticides**

**Respondents were read the following preamble before answering questions regarding use:**

*Pesticide is a term that is used for a variety of products that are designed to kill different kinds of pests such as insects, rodents, weeds and fungus. The cosmetic use of pesticides is defined as to applying pesticides for the maintenance of landscaped areas such as lawns, ornamental gardens, walkways and driveways.*

**Respondents were asked the following questions and responded as recorded.**

*Do you currently use pesticides on your property for cosmetic purposes? {For example, on your lawn?}*

Yes	27%
No	73%

**Respondents who stated that they do not currently use pesticides were asked the following two questions:**

*Have you ever used pesticides on your property for cosmetic purposes?*

Yes	37%
No	57%
Don't know	6%



*Why do you no longer use pesticides on your property for cosmetic purposes?*

Health hazard	31%
Harmful to the environment	23%
No need / no longer require	20%
Pollutes (water / ground)	11%
Educated / became aware of hazards	6%
Expensive / cost	5%
Harmful to pets	4%

### **Discontinuing Use of Cosmetic Pesticides**

**Respondents were asked the following questions and responded as recorded.**

*If you were provided with information on methods to have a weed free lawn and garden without using cosmetic pesticides, what would be the likelihood that you would stop using them? Please respond using the scale where one is not at all likely and five is very likely.*

Not at all likely	-
Not very likely	-
Neither likely nor unlikely	-
Somewhat likely	21%
Very likely	76%
Don't know	3%

*Have you or has anyone at this residence asked someone in your neighbourhood to stop the use of / stop spraying chemicals on their lawn, trees or garden?*

Yes	10%
No	88%
Don't know	2%

*Can you tell me why you asked them to stop the spraying of these chemicals?*

Health concerns	38%
Danger to children	25%
Environmental concerns / pollutes	24%
Danger to animals / pets	10%
Kills other plants / vegetables	3%

## **Product Testing**

**Respondents were asked the following questions and responded as recorded.**

*Please agree or disagree with the following statement using the scale of strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree or strongly agree.*

*“I feel that cosmetic pesticides have undergone extensive federal and provincial government testing for safety and effectiveness.”*

Strongly disagree	23%
Somewhat disagree	23%
Somewhat agree	31%
Strongly agree	6%
Don't know	16%