



# School Pesticide Monitor

A Bi-Monthly Bulletin on Pesticides and Alternatives  
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## Irvine, CA Adopts Organic Management Policy for City Property

On February 23, the City Council of Irvine, California, with a population of over 250,000 people, voted unanimously to stop the use of hazardous pesticides on city property. The Council adopted an organic management policy that limits the use of synthetic pesticides on city property, which includes 570 acres of parks, more than 800 acres of right-of-way, 70,000 trees and nearly 1.5 million square feet of facilities. The policy permits pesticides “only when deemed necessary to protect public health and economic impact.”

The vote capped a campaign led by the local advocacy group Non Toxic Irvine, which has been advocating that the city nix synthetic pesticides in favor of better plant management and materials compatible with organic practices. The group is led by local mothers concerned about the synthetic pesticide health risks related to children. Kathleen Hallal, a leader with Non Toxic Irvine, said, “It is not radical for a city to use organic methods. It’s radical to use toxic methods to control weeds and pests around our children.”

According to the Orange County Register, in May 2015, the Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) agreed to end the use of glyphosate (RoundUp) on all school properties. The school board was persuaded by the presentation by Non Toxic Irvine, which pointed to the World Health Organization’s (WHO) International Agency for the Research on Cancer (IARC) classification of glyphosate as a probable human carcinogen, or chemical that causes cancer in humans based on laboratory testing. Glyphosate is a phosphanoglycine herbicide that inhibits an enzyme essen-

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## Study Finds Glyphosate Residue in Bodies, Particularly Troublesome for Children

A vast majority of German citizens are contaminated with the herbicide glyphosate, according to a report from the Heinrich Boll Foundation. The findings come just one week after another environmental group in Germany, the Munich Environmental Institute, found traces of the popular weed killer in popular German beers. The results of this study add concern to EU-wide deliberations regarding the renewal of glyphosate’s registration.

According to the study, 99.6% of the 2,009 German citizens monitored have some level of glyphosate found in their urine. Over 75% of these individuals have concentrations that are higher than the EU’s legal level for glyphosate in drinking water. Further, children up to age 19 are found to exhibit higher levels of urinary glyphosate than older adults. Individuals

living near agricultural areas also show elevated concentrations compared to those that did not.

Given recent data finding glyphosate to be the most widely used herbicide on the globe, it is not surprising that the chemical is near ubiquitous in human bodies. Similar results are expected in the United States. A pilot study conducted by the group Moms Across America in 2014 found that glyphosate may also bioaccumulate in the human body, as revealed by high levels of the chemical in the breast milk of mothers tested. Although risk assessors and industry attempt to downplay the impact of widespread glyphosate exposure, recent studies call these claims into question.

In September 2015, a study published in

Environmental Health News found that chronic, low-dose exposure to glyphosate led to adverse effects on liver and kidney health. Beyond direct impacts to the kidney and liver, glyphosate has recently been implicated as a having sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity based upon an analysis of laboratory animals studies conducted by the World Health Organization’s International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Despite this data, the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessments (BfR) has consistently attempted to downplay the dangers associated with glyphosate exposure. Shortly after IARC’s assessment was released, BfR disputed its claims through a report that relied heavily on unpublished studies from the Glyphosate Task Force, an industry group dedicated to reregistering glyphosate in

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## Irvine, CA

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tial to plant growth. Since this decision, Joe Hoffman, Director of Maintenance and Operations, established a Pest Management Team to come up with a pest management plan that does not include synthetic pesticides. The IUSD has also implemented pilot sites on school grounds and playing fields at Canyon View Elementary, in response to community health concerns and in order to test the effectiveness of organic practices.

In the last few months, Non Toxic Irvine has shifted its focus to the city in order to seek a change in policy that would affect all city property. After receiving a petition with hundreds of signatures from Change.org, Irvine Mayor Steven Choi ordered a temporary moratorium on pesticide spraying by city maintenance staff. Non Toxic Irvine then met with the City of Irvine's Landscape Maintenance Superintendent to dis-

cuss organic land management, where they discussed the elimination of synthetic pesticides from city property. In January, Irvine Councilmembers Christina Shea and Beth Krom placed the toxic chemicals discussion on their



February agenda with an opportunity to vote. That discussion took place on Tuesday and resulted in a unanimous vote to eliminate the use of synthetic pesticides.

What started as a group of concerned mothers, Non Toxic Irvine has grown into an advocacy group that is determined to transition all of Irvine to organic practices. The group's concerns stem from numerous studies about the effects of glyphosate on children and

those associated with cancer.

As a result of the IARC listing, California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) announced that it intended to list glyphosate and three other chemicals as cancer-causing chemicals under California's Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Proposition 65). Under California law, Proposition 65 requires that certain substances identified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) be listed as known cancer-causing chemicals. The major manufacturer of the toxic herbicide, Monsanto, has since sued the state, fearing consumer blowback should it be required to label its flagship product Roundup as carcinogenic.

Contact Beyond Pesticides at [info@beyondpesticides.org](mailto:info@beyondpesticides.org) for support of campaigns to adopt local organic policies and transition to organic practices in your school and community.

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## Glyphosate

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the EU. The European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) signaled its intent to move forward with glyphosate registration after determining it was "unlikely to pose a carcinogenic hazard to humans." It is important to note that IARC and EFSA's evaluations differ, as EFSA only evaluates pure glyphosate, while IARC reviews consider both the chemical and its formulated products, which individuals are actually exposed to in the real world.

In response to the latest report, Harold Ebner of the German Greens noted in a statement to the EU-news website Euroactive, "Now nearly every single one of us has been contaminated by plant poison, it is clear to me that no new authorisations for 2031 should be issued [for glyphosate]."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has indicated it will release its preliminary risk assessment on glyphosate for public comment this year. It was already announced last month that the Food and Drug Administration will begin testing glyphosate residues in food. However, although a positive step, this move is largely seen as political by the agency, a response to public pressure and not focused on evaluating health concerns.

Beyond Pesticides urges individuals concerned about glyphosate exposure to support organic systems that do not rely on hazardous carcinogenic pesticides. In agriculture, concerned consumers can buy food with the certified organic label, which not only disallows synthetic pesticides like glyphosate, but also the use of sewage sludge and genetically engineered ingredients. Instead of prophylac-

tic use of pesticides and biotechnology, responsible organic farms focus on fostering habitat for pest predators and other beneficial insects, and only resort to judicious use of least-toxic pesticides when other cultural, structural, mechanical, and biological controls have been attempted and proven ineffective.

To control weeds in lawns and landscapes, organic systems can also replace toxic pesticides. By focusing on soil health, organic systems build natural resiliency that resists insect and weed pressure. A growing number of communities are moving towards organic land care on their public and private spaces. Help us build the movement by signing your support for a pesticide-free community today! Go to <http://bit.ly/1PxqJOF> to sign the petition, or email [info@beyondpesticides.org](mailto:info@beyondpesticides.org).