

Submission from Paul Melsom 6 May 2014

The Pesticide Amendment Bill 2013 that was passed and made into law has still not addressed many serious health and safety issues properly for pesticide application especially for schools and in the public domain.

Although some small advances were made during the bill including improved signage, leaflets for schools, removal of Diazinon and Paraquat from the register, these changes are still not enough to ensure anywhere near adequate health and safety for the public.

It is especially important to safeguard children and the public from these dangerous toxic pesticides that have both short and long term health consequences which can lead to many serious illnesses including cancers, endocrine disruption, ADHD etc. some being life threatening.

The selected pesticides listed below from the Hong Kong register includes just a few of several on the register which the government still fails to understand the effects of these toxic chemicals and the serious consequences to public health and especially if they are used in schools.

Atrazine

Bromadiolone

Chlorpyrifos

2,4-D

Glyphosate

Malathion

Temephos

I find this astounding and an unforgiving error in judgment by the government that anyone is freely allowed to use these pesticides in school playgrounds and even classrooms using any concentration they wish and whose application goes totally unchecked by the government. By simply googling pesticides from this small list and including search words such as children, health, endocrine disruption, cancer will reveal one or more effects on health, especially for young children.

I therefore appeal once again to the legislators not to drop their scrutiny on harmful pesticides used in schools and domestically and to keep this issue open.

On a positive note my sons school has not been using pesticides for over a year and half. It has been using Integrated pest management (IPM), using no pesticides whatever and the results so far are very encouraging for mosquito control. The government needs to consider looking into a subsidy scheme and more education to help pesticide businesses move more towards IPM and away from pesticides.