# Scarborough moves to protect kids from pesticides

Nov 2, 2010 by Karl Tupper

After sweeping across Canada, the movement to end the cosmetic use of pesticides is gaining a foothold in New England. Last week, the town council of Scarborough, Maine, held a public debate on a proposed ordinance that would restrict the use of pesticides on town property, including parks, sports fields, and school playgrounds. Homeowners would still be free to apply chemicals to their lawns and gardens, but the sponsors of the measure hope that many citizens would be inspired to follow the town's lead.

New York and Connecticut already have statewide bans on the use of pesticides on school grounds, New Hampshire is considering a similar law, and four towns in Maine already have ordinances similar the Scarborough proposal, according to NECN.com. The town of Marblehead, Massachusetts, went organic back in 2001. No doubt fearing that Scarborough might be next, the lawn care pesticide industry showed up in force at the town council meeting. Paul Tukey from Safelawns.org was there in person and relates:

> “I had no idea that this would bring industry response so swiftly and in such a large way,” said councilor Karen D’Andrea, who openly supported an anti-pesticide ordinance.

I, however, am not surprised. After initially being caught off gaurd in Canada, the industry has since reacted quickly and aggressively to grassroots efforts in the U.S. to restrict the use of chemicals on yards, parks, and school grounds. No town is too small or proposal too modest to escape the industry's attention. The strategy seems to be: show up in force, hijack the debate, and create the impression of deep opposition in order to intimidate lawmakers from taking action.

But folks in Scarborough tend to be good people. This is the town, after all, where my parents bought their first house! So I anticipate that reason will prevail, and this commonsense ordinance will pass.

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