

March 18, 2016

MEMO TO: IEM-52 File

F R O M: Elle Cochran, Chair

Infrastructure and Environmental Management Committee

*Elle Cochran*

SUBJECT: **TRANSMITTAL OF REFERENCE MATERIAL RELATING TO  
INTEGRATED PEST AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ON  
COUNTY PROPERTY** (IEM-52)

The attached reference material pertains to Item 52 on the Committee's agenda.

iem:ltr:052afile01:scj

Attachment

Times Community News / Daily Pilot / News

# Irvine council decides to go organic on pesticides and herbicides



UC Irvine professor Bruce Blumberg, left, and Non Toxic Irvine board member Ayn Craciun, right, attend Tuesday's Irvine City Council meeting to promote the use of organic pesticides and herbicides. Behind them are James Konte and his sons Michael and Trevor, dressed in Little League uniforms. The council voted to prioritize use of organic compounds on all city-maintained landscaping. (Matt Morrison)

By **Matt Morrison**

FEBRUARY 24, 2016, 4:09 PM

**T**aking unusually swift action for a government process, the Irvine City Council on Tuesday unanimously approved using organic pesticides and herbicides on all city-maintained landscaping, including at parks, athletic fields and public buildings.

Responding to a city staff report and more than an hour of passionate public comments from dozens of residents — most of them rallied by the community group Non Toxic Irvine — the council voted 5 to 0 to amend the Integrated Pest Management Policy to prioritize use of organic compounds in pesticides and herbicides over products based on synthetic chemicals.

The policy will continue to list non-organic chemicals as an option when other measures are ineffective.



"I'm shocked at the impact that we had. I can't believe the speed at which they made a change," Non Toxic Irvine board member Ayn Craciun said after the council meeting. "I feel like they really listened to the concerns of the people who live here and made the right decision, which is not always what you expect in these situations."

Non Toxic Irvine already had persuaded several homeowners associations and the Irvine Unified School District to stop using certain products containing the chemical glyphosate. It is the active ingredient in the weed killer Roundup, which Irvine Unified stopped using after meeting with the group in November to hear its concerns about possible harmful health effects.

Like many of the speakers Tuesday, Craciun has been touched by health issues that they say can be linked to the use of toxic pesticides. She has two healthy children but also suffered multiple unexplained miscarriages while living in Irvine, she said.

Several parents detailed family struggles with childhood cancer that occurred while living in Irvine neighborhoods. Several speakers were accompanied by their children, including James Konte, whose sons Michael, 11, and Trevor, 6, were dressed in Little League baseball uniforms.

"This is something, that if you have children and they're constantly running around and rolling in the dirt like my two little ones are, you worry about the effects," Konte said afterward. "Michael missed a baseball game to be at this. I thought that was important to do."

But Orange County Agricultural Commissioner Mike Bennett raised concerns about what a change in policy might mean for Irvine farmers.

"If you required them to only use organic, then this would severely limit a farmer's options that could likely result in crop losses or increased production costs or both," Bennett said.

Councilwoman Christina Shea, who placed the issue on the agenda, said the policy affects only city-maintained property and not private landholders.

A presentation by Non Toxic Irvine included comments from Bruce Blumberg, a professor of developmental and cell biology and pharmaceutical sciences at UC Irvine.

"I think it was important for the council to hear just how concerned the public was," Blumberg said after the meeting. "The testimony of the various citizens really rang true, and there was really no argument against doing what was done. The council saw that and they acted."



## Latest News

### City of Reno introduces Pesticide-Free Parks program

**Post Date:** 09/24/2015 9:11 AM

Yesterday, Reno City Council approved a [Pesticide-Free Parks program](#) for 12 Reno parks. The two-year pilot program was born out of community concern about pesticide use, and the [Neighborhood Advisory Boards](#) (NABs) were utilized to choose 10 of the 12 designated parks.

Staff identified two downtown parks, then worked with the five City of Reno NABs to select two parks within each Ward. The Recreation and Parks Commission recommended that Council approve the program.

“This is a major win for the City in regards to our priority of providing and maintaining safe and healthy neighborhoods,” Ward 2 Reno City Councilmember Naomi Duerr says. “Community input will continue to drive the important decisions we make.”

The following pesticide-free City of Reno parks will be identified by signage (see image below) on site:

- Downtown: Barbara Bennett Park and Wingfield Park
- Ward 1: Canyon Creek Park and Plumas Park
- Ward 2: Virginia Lake Park and Crystal Lake Park
- Ward 3: Pat Baker Park and Wilkinson Park
- Ward 4: Raleigh Heights Park and Silver Lake Park
- Ward 5: Lake Park and Whitaker Park


[PDF map of the 12 parks](#) shows their locations around the city. [A Google map](#) of the parks is also available online. As “pesticide-free,” staff will discontinue the routine use of herbicides for general weed control in these 12 parks. Alternative strategies would include use of organic or non-registered products, weed burning, and other manual weed-control efforts.

Parks staff attended a training session sponsored by [Beyond Pesticides](#), a national nonprofit organization promoting alternatives to pesticide use. This training program was targeted toward turf maintenance through organic methods.

[View the Staff Report](#) for more information about the variety of methods used by the City of Reno to control weeds in parks and landscaped rights-of-way.

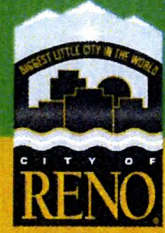
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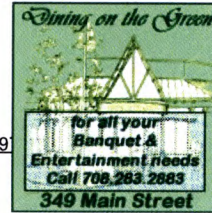
## Richmond, California Unanimously Approves Pesticide Restrictions

Washington, DC—(ENEWSPF)—July 31, 2012. Last week, Richmond, California's City Council unanimously approved a [pesticide reform ordinance](http://sireweb.ci.richmond.ca.us/sirepub/cache/0/mpemdz555soa5vmqbiwjiw/346680073020120933049) (<http://sireweb.ci.richmond.ca.us/sirepub/cache/0/mpemdz555soa5vmqbiwjiw/346680073020120933049>) targeting the use of toxic chemical pesticides within city boundaries. Barring a public health emergency or immediate threat to city property, the regulation bans city departments from using any pesticide considered a known carcinogen (Toxicity Category I and II) by the U.S Environmental Protection Agency. It also prohibits city workers and contractors from applying pesticide products which contain highly toxic organophosphate and carbamate class chemicals. Moreover, with the implementation of the new ordinance, picnic areas, playgrounds, and riparian areas will be considered "no-spray" zones. In other public areas, the legislation puts a strong emphasis on non-chemical methods of pest prevention and control. It would allow the use of least-toxic pesticides only as a last resort, with the intention to significantly reduce or eliminate the use of and exposure to pesticides. The legislation also requires all city departments involved in pest management to submit an implementation plan and undergo training and education programs on least-toxic pest control.

According to Roger Roberts of the [Contra Costa Times](http://www.contracostatimes.com/news/ci_21158211/guidelines-prohibit-use-known-carcinogens?IADID=Search-www.contracostatimes.com-www.contracostatimes.com) ([http://www.contracostatimes.com/news/ci\\_21158211/guidelines-prohibit-use-known-carcinogens?IADID=Search-www.contracostatimes.com-www.contracostatimes.com](http://www.contracostatimes.com/news/ci_21158211/guidelines-prohibit-use-known-carcinogens?IADID=Search-www.contracostatimes.com-www.contracostatimes.com)), when the City Council first considered the ordinance in June, some were skeptical of the proposal. They felt that changing pest control practices would put an unnecessary burden on the city's finances. However, after Parks and Landscape Superintendent Chris Chamberlain explained that his department had already begun to implement a least-toxic pest control strategy without increasing the financial cost to the city, dissenters of the proposal agreed to support the plan. "We just point you to it, and you get it done and do it well," remarked Corky Booze, who was converted by Mr. Chamberlain's assurances. The Parks and Landscape department oversees pest management practices on over 600 acres of city land on a \$4 million budget. Mr. Chamberlain added that, within the past 2 years, the department has decreased their use of carcinogenic pesticides by over 40 percent.

The passage of this ordinance adds to the growing movement across the country calling for increased restrictions on the use of dangerous chemicals in the public sphere. In addition to Richmond, CA, Beyond Pesticides has worked with localities throughout the U.S. in an effort to promote organic land care systems and restrict the hazardous use of chemicals. Washington D.C. [recently passed legislation](http://www.beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/?p=7675) (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/?p=7675>) which restricts the use of pesticides on District property, near waterways, and in schools and day care centers. Ohio's Cuyoga County [successfully banned](http://www.beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/?p=7255) (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/?p=7255>) a majority of toxic pesticide uses on county property, prioritizing the use of natural, organic, horticultural and maintenance practices with an Organic Pest Management (OPM) program. The City of Greenbelt, Maryland also has [a law](http://www.beyondpesticides.org/states/md/City%20of%20Greenbelt.pdf) (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/states/md/City%20of%20Greenbelt.pdf>) that completely eliminates the use of cosmetic pesticides through a phase out period, and includes a requirement that all city contractors follow OPM and organic land care management. The village of New Paltz, New York has a ["Healthy Turf and Landscape Policy."](http://www.beyondpesticides.org/lawn/activist/NewPaltzNYfinalpolicy.pdf) (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/lawn/activist/NewPaltzNYfinalpolicy.pdf>) which emphasizes the precautionary principle, and only allows the use of pesticides if a pest problem poses a threat to public health. While stopping short of an all-out ban, Connecticut currently has a [statewide prohibition](http://www.cga.ct.gov/2011/pub/chap170.htm#Sec10-231b.htm) (<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2011/pub/chap170.htm#Sec10-231b.htm>) on the use of toxic pesticides on school grounds. The state of New York also acted to protect children by passing the ["Child Safe Playing Field Act"](#)

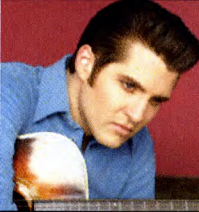
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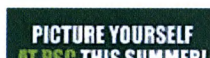
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(<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/?p=4516>) in 2010, which requires that all schools, preschools, and day care centers stop using pesticides on any playgrounds or playing field. Additionally, several communities (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/?p=7198>) in Cape Cod, Massachusetts are currently in the process of moving towards organic land care as a norm in their public spaces.

Of 30 commonly used lawn pesticides, 19 are linked with cancer or carcinogenicity, 13 are linked with birth defects, 21 with reproductive effects, 26 with liver or kidney damage, 15 with neurotoxicity, and 11 with disruption of the endocrine (hormonal) system. Of those same 30 lawn pesticides, 17 are detected in groundwater, 23 have the ability to leach into drinking water sources, 24 are toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms vital to our ecosystem, 11 are toxic to bees, and 16 are toxic to birds.

Organic land management is practical and economical. Opponents may claim that organic management will cost more money, or put the fields at risk for disease and weed infestation; however, in a Cornell University study of turf, chemically maintained turf is more susceptible to disease. Another report (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/?p=3318>) prepared by Grassroots Environmental Education and Beyond Pesticides' Board Member Chip Osborne for the New York State legislature concludes that organic approaches can save money. The report compares the relative costs of maintaining a typical high school football field using a chemical-intensive program and an organic program over a five-year period and finds that the annual cost of maintaining an organic field can be as much as 25% lower than the cost of chemical-based programs. The Parks and Recreation Department in Branford, Connecticut has a successful organic land care program (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/lawn/activist/BranfordCTpolicy.pdf>) resulting in more attractive playing fields at a decreased cost to taxpayers. Furthermore, Harvard University (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/?p=2530>) saved two million gallons of water a year by managing the grounds organically, as irrigation needs have been reduced by 30 percent. Previously, it cost Harvard \$35,000 a year to get rid of "landscape waste" from its campus grounds. Now that cost is gone because the school keeps all grass clippings, leaves and branches for composting and making compost teas. This in turn saves the university an additional \$10,000 from having to purchase fertilizers elsewhere.

For more information on organic-based, pesticide-free lawn and landscape management, see Beyond Pesticides Lawns and Landscapes program page (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/lawn>). Beyond Pesticides encourages concerned citizens to stand up and make their voices heard in their community. If you'd like to join Richmond, California and help ban pesticide use in your community's public spaces, contact Beyond Pesticides at 202-543-5450 or at [info@beyondpesticides.org](mailto:info@beyondpesticides.org) (<mailto:info@beyondpesticides.org>).

All unattributed positions and opinions in this piece are those of Beyond Pesticides.

Source: <http://www.beyondpesticides.org> (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org>)

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