



BECOME A GLYPHOSATE FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Healthy Schools Act – Go a step further for the sake of your school district's children

August 1, 2018

Dear Integrated Pest Management Coordinator,

A Voice for Choice Advocacy has partnered with a number of different organizations to aid schools in complying with California's Healthy Schools Act and taking it a further step to ensure the children of California have the least toxic burden when it comes to pest management in their schools. **We ask you to stop using Glyphosate containing products completely by 2020.**

Your school district already has to comply with the Healthy Schools Act, which states that the use of the least toxic integrated pest management practices are the preferred method of managing pests in an effort to reduce toxic exposure to children at public school sites.¹

While we know schools are trying to use the least toxic pest management practices, our concern at this time is the use of Glyphosate containing products used to control weeds on school grounds. Over 90% of California schools use glyphosate containing products to treat weeds during the school year. Products which contain glyphosate include, but are not limited to, Ranger, Razor, Rodeo, Aquamaster, and a variety of Roundup products. In 2017, Glyphosate was added to Prop 65, which identifies chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm, because of its carcinogenic properties.² While glyphosate is not on the HSA/EPA prohibited list, its addition to Prop 65 shows that the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) understands its toxicity. Glyphosate has not only been found to be cancer causing, but has also been linked to heart disease, autism, Alzheimer's disease, obesity, diabetes, cataracts, celiac disease, liver disease, lung disease, asthma, deterioration of joints, acid reflux and other digestive disorders, birth defects, infertility, sterility, skin disorders, scleroderma and more.

The main consequences of glyphosate are twofold: it disrupts important cellular functions in plants, humans and other mammals, and it destroys important compounds in soil that are needed for human health. Children are especially vulnerable to the health effects of pesticide exposure because of their age-appropriate hand-to-mouth behaviors, their closer proximity to the ground, and their higher breathing rates. Pesticides also negatively affect cognitive health and hormone development in adolescents.

There are easy non-toxic alternatives to weed management, which in the long run are more cost effective than using glyphosate containing products. Having healthy soil, using at least two native turfgrasses, proper watering, and a sensible landscape design can all help your lawn ecosystem develop a natural resistance to weeds. Indeed, weeds in lawns are often a sign that the balance of the soil is off. Low pH and soil compaction tend to promote weed growth, so aerating lawns and applying lime to raise the pH levels is essential when weeds are growing prolifically. When weeds do appear, there are a number of non-toxic options that can be applied, and if those do not mitigate the issue, there are a number of significantly less toxic options than glyphosate containing products.

¹ https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/pestmgmt/pubs/hsa_factsheet.pdf

² <https://oehha.ca.gov/proposition-65/chemicals/glyphosate>



We live in an ever busy world, which is why we, and the organizations we have teamed up with, would like to partner with you to ensure that your school district finds an alternative weed management plan to eliminate the use of Glyphosate by July 2020. This requires rethinking not only the products which should be replaced by least toxic ones, but changing weed prevention practices to ensure the conditions to prevent problems in the first place. Specifically, Beyond Pesticides has aided numerous schools and cities shift to least-toxic management methods, and specifically not using Glyphosate. They have said they would be happy to join us to work with you to meet this goal and ensure long term cost efficiencies.

Included with this letter are the following:

- Requested Resolution to be signed by your school board committing to becoming Glyphosate free by 2020
- List of organizations supporting this project and urging your school district to become glyphosate-free.
- Beyond Pesticide's Maintaining Sustainable Lawns and Landscapes which shows how lawns can be pesticide free
(<https://www.beyondpesticides.org/assets/media/documents/lawn/documents/MaintainingSustainableLawns.pdf>)
- Useful links to documents and websites to assist with making the conversion to be a Glyphosate Free School.

Please join us in putting your school district's children's health first and to stop using glyphosate containing products. Our goal is to have 100% of schools in California sign the resolution by July 2019, with 100% of schools becoming Glyphosate Free by July 2020.

Please respond to this letter indicating when the resolution can be brought forward as an item on your school board's agenda.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Christina Hildebrand

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Giving issues a voice, A Voice for Choice Advocacy advocates for people's rights to be fully informed about the composition, quality, and short- and long-term health effects of all products that go into people's bodies, such as food, water, air, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.



Organizations Supporting Glyphosate Free Schools



**A VOICE FOR CHOICE
ADVOCACY**



**Useful links to documents and websites to assist
with making the conversion to be a Glyphosate Free School**

Health Schools Act requirements:

https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/pestmgt/pubs/hsa_factsheet.pdf

Beyond Pesticides Children and Schools Overview:

<https://beyondpesticides.org/programs/children-and-schools/overview>

Beyond Pesticides Organizational Resources:

<https://beyondpesticides.org/programs/children-and-schools/resources/organizations>

Alternative weed management:

The easiest way to identify safer materials is to start by identifying the problem. Find information on least-toxic solutions (including prevention) tied to specific pests at the Beyond Pesticides [ManageSafe](#) page.

Pesticide Free School Success Stories:

<https://beyondpesticides.org/assets/media/documents/schools/publications/IPMSuccessStories.pdf>

The Grass Is Greener at Harvard (NY Times Article):

And also cheaper - <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/24/garden/24garden.html>