



**SUSTAINABILITY
OFFICE**

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PRESS RELEASE

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South Portland Adopts Pesticide Use Ordinance

On Wednesday September 7, the South Portland City Council passed an ordinance to restrict the use of pesticides for all turf, landscape, and outdoor pest management activities in the City.

The ordinance ([ORDINANCE #2 16/17 – “Pesticide Use Ordinance”](#)) seeks to minimize the detrimental effects of pesticides on public health and the environment by greatly restricting pesticide use and promoting organic landscaping and lawn care practices to prevent pest problems. Details of these practices will be provided through an extensive education and outreach campaign.

Under the ordinance, only pesticides approved for use under the USDA’s National Organic Program or classified as “minimum risk” by the USEPA will be allowed for use. All other pesticides will be restricted on all public and private property, whether managed by a commercial operator, licensed applicator, business owner or resident.

The ban will not go into effect immediately. It be phased in over three years to allow for education and outreach geared at helping community members understand and transition to organic land care practices. Starting in May 2017, the ban will go into effect for City-owned property first. It will be broadened to include private property in May 2018, and it will apply to golf courses starting in May 2019.

While the ordinance is a broad ban on the use of pesticides, there are exemptions for public health and safety and non-aesthetic uses of pesticides. For instance, prohibited pesticides may be used to control plants that are poisonous such as poison ivy, pests of significant health importance such as ticks and mosquitoes, pests that may cause damage to a structure, such as carpenter ants or termites. Applications to control invasive insects such as the Emerald Ash Borer, Asian Longhorned Beetle and other insects identified as invasive by the Maine Forest Service are also exempt.

Though there are no monetary penalties associated with non-compliance, the ordinance does have an enforcement mechanism that emphasizes the public’s right to know and compliance assistance over fines. The Sustainability Coordinator, assisted by the Code Enforcement Officer

will maintain a listing of violations (in an aggregate area, not by address) on the City's website, and the Sustainability Coordinator will work with all alleged violators to bring them into compliance by providing educational materials and assistance on the use of cultural practices and less toxic chemicals as a last resort to achieve their desired results.

Because the ordinance will be a culture change as much as a policy change, City staff believe a strong education and outreach campaign will balance the challenges inherent to enforcement. "We are working under the belief that most people are interested in complying with the law" says Julie Rosenbach, the City's Sustainability Coordinator, "and we are focusing our efforts on helping them understand how to do it."

A seven-member Pest Management Advisory Committee (PMAC) comprised of the City's Stormwater Program Coordinator, a practicing agronomist, two licensed landscape professionals, and three residents will be established to oversee the implementation of the ordinance and advise the City Council and the Sustainability Coordinator regarding its efficacy. The PMAC will review waiver applications, work with the Sustainability Coordinator to develop outreach and education, issue annual reports, and conduct an evaluation of the ordinance every three years.

The City of South Portland is holding a **press conference at City Hall** on Tuesday September 13 at 11:00am to publicize the adoption of this ordinance and answer questions.

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