

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DECEMBER 6, 2011**

### **Some Retailers unaware of Provincial Pesticide Regulations**

Halifax, NS—According to a report released today by the Pesticide Free Nova Scotia Coalition (PFNS), many retailers across the province have not fully implemented recent legislation to control the sale and use of harmful pesticides.

Nova Scotia's *Act to Control Non-Essential Pesticides*, which became law in April 2011, specifies what pesticides are allowable, restricted ("excepted-use"), or banned, and how they are to be stored and sold. In the case of excepted-use pesticides, a trained vendor must be available to handle and sell them, and must provide literature and information to the consumer about the ban and the threats of the product.

According to Stephanie Hughes of the Ecology Action Centre "the legislation is an excellent step forward for Nova Scotia. It demonstrates a clear commitment to protecting us and our environment from harmful chemical products. However, as with any legislation, it's only as good as its implementation." She adds "this report shows that the Province needs to invest more to ensure that retailers have the tools they need to carry out the necessary consumer education, and implement the law effectively."

The report is based on an audit of twenty-six retailers in seven regions of the province. In addition to looking at the availability and storage of pesticides, the audit went further to examine whether written information about pesticides and the law was available to consumers, and report on the overall knowledge level of retail staff members.

The audit shows that many dangerous pesticides are, indeed, coming off of retail shelves—a major success for this young legislation. However, it also reveals that very little consumer education is happening. Half of the stores that are certified to sell excepted-use pesticides, provided no written information and employed staff described as having little or no knowledge about the ban. When results from non-certified retailers is added to this, the numbers drop further. On the whole, only nine of the twenty-six retailers audited were described as having reliable knowledge about this legislation.

Nick Langley of the Canadian Cancer Society comments "public and consumer education is a critical component of this legislation, and the fastest route to ensuring that people understand its importance. Pesticides pose major threats to our health and if the legislation is going to protect people, it must be accompanied by education—both via retailers and directly to the public."

The report makes a number of recommendations for improving the legislation, including increased early enforcement—to ensure full compliance as soon as possible—as well as greater education efforts.

PFNS is a coalition of organizations and individuals who share a strong concern about the risks of cosmetic and non-agricultural pesticides to our health and the environment. The group’s principal goal is the reduction and elimination of cosmetic and non-agricultural pesticide use throughout Nova Scotia. There are 14 members and endorsers of PFNS, including the Ecology Action Centre, Canadian Cancer Society, Real Alternatives to Toxins in the Environment, the Environmental Health Association of Nova Scotia, the Learning Disabilities Association of Nova Scotia, Canadians for a Safe Learning Environment, and the Sierra Club of Canada, Atlantic Chapter.

For more information, please contact:

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FOR BROADCAST USE:

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According to Stephanie Hughes of the Ecology Action Centre “the legislation is an excellent step forward for Nova Scotia. However, as with any legislation, it’s only as good as its implementation.”

This report shows that the Province needs to invest more to ensure that retailers have the tools they need to carry out consumer education, and implement the law effectively.”

The report is based on an audit of 26 retailers in 7 regions of the province. The audit shows that while many dangerous pesticides are coming off of retail shelves—a major success for this young legislation—there is actually very little consumer education happening. Half of the stores that are certified to sell excepted-use pesticides, provided no written information and employed staff described as having “little or no” knowledge about the ban. When results from non-certified retailers is added to this, the numbers drop further. On the whole, only 9 of the 26 retailers were described as having reliable knowledge about this legislation.

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### AUDIT RESULTS SUMMARY

	CERTIFIED DOMESTIC RETAILERS (11 Audited)		NON-CERTIFIED RETAILERS (15 Audited)		
	Good	Poor	Good	Poor	Not Applicable
Availability of banned & excepted-use products	8 All excepted-use products behind lock and key	3 Some excepted-use products freely available	8 No banned or excepted use products on display.	1 Banned product on display	6 Lack of stock due to end of season
Availability of written information	5 Some information available (but not always the information required by regulations)	6 No information available	3 Displayed signage or resources	12 No information available	--
Presence of certified vendor	6 (3 available on site, 3 only referenced by other staff)	5 No reference to a certified vendor	--	--	15 Non certified retailers not required to certify vendors
Overall knowledge level of staff	6 “very” knowledgeable	5 “limited” or “no” knowledge	3 “very” knowledgeable	12 “limited” or “no” knowledge	--
Comment	<p>Only 3 retailers—less than a third audited—were described as implementing the pesticide ban regulations properly in all categories audited.</p> <p>In most categories, even a conservative analysis shows that only half of retailers are respecting the law.</p>		<p>These results show that the legislation has effectively removed dangerous pesticides from some retail shelves, which is good.</p> <p>However, volunteers generally left these locations with no information, or false information about the cosmetic pesticides ban. This indicates that these retailers are either doing nothing to increase consumer awareness or actually interfering with it.</p>		