



Town of New Paltz, New York

Neil Bettez, Town Supervisor

PO Box 550 • 52 Clearwater Rd. • New Paltz, NY 12561
Phone: 845/255.0604 • TTY: 800/622.1220 • Fax: 845/255.4084
www.townofnewpaltz.org

Mr. Chris Cassell
Director of Corporate Sustainability
Lowe's Companies, Inc.
1000 Lowe's Boulevard
Mooresville, NC 28117

Dear Mr. Cassell:

The Town of New Paltz, New York, commends Lowe's for its May 29th decision to no longer sell paint strippers that contain the chemicals methylene chloride and N-Methyl-2-pyrrolidone (NMP), which have been blamed in dozens of accidental deaths. We understand that Lowe's will be voluntarily removing 19 products that contain either of the chemicals, which go by such brand names as Klean-Strip, Goof Off, and Jasco. Lowe's is the first major retailer to stop selling these products, taking a decisive action in the absence of a ban on the two chemicals that were previously deemed to have unreasonable risks by the federal government.

We believe that Lowe's has another opportunity to lead by example with respect to a variety of fertilizer and weed control products that are sold in the outdoors departments of its stores. On a recent visit by members of our Environmental Conservation Board (EnCB) to the Lowe's store in Highland, New York (store #2326), it was evident that nearly 100 feet of shelf space was devoted to products such as Roundup and GroundClear that contain chemicals like glyphosate isoprylamine salt. In addition to the shelved products, there was a large separate display of Roundup products with hundreds of containers for sale. During the same visit, the group identified only one product, EcoLogic Weed and Grass Killer, that represents a greener alternative for weed management. The EcoLogic product, made with rosemary and cinnamon essential oils, occupied about a one-foot width of shelf space (less than one-percent of the volume of the weed killers for sale).

Given the high quantity of glyphosate-containing products selling at the nearby Lowe's location, we are troubled about the likelihood of these products being actively applied in New Paltz and the outlying area in Ulster County, New York. Numerous lawsuits have been brought against Monsanto, the manufacturer of Roundup, claiming that exposure to the product can cause non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Overseas, the European Union voted in 2017 to limit glyphosate's license renewal for a period of five years, and some countries like France, Italy and Austria, are looking to phase out its use on a faster schedule. The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has deemed glyphosate a probable carcinogen.

The use of glyphosate has also been associated with environmental impacts. Researchers have found that honeybees exposed to Roundup exhibited lowered sensitivity to sucrose-leading to a decreased ability to track and find food and pollinate. This sets up a chain of events that can eventually have a significant adverse impact on food production for humans. This is of particular concern to us, because New Paltz is a community with professional beekeepers and numerous farms. In addition to impacts to honeybees, several studies indicate glyphosate's impacts to a variety of other organisms including earthworms, which are extremely important for soil health.

With the above public health and environmental concerns in mind, the Town of New Paltz would like to suggest that Lowe's take a precautionary approach in its sale of fertilizers and weed killing products. This strategy could include a broader offering of products that do not contain glyphosate, such as EcoLogic's weed and grass killer, mentioned earlier. Customers could also benefit from some simple in-store messaging displayed in Lowe's outdoor departments, about best management practices to eradicate weeds that would augment the information about application rates on the product labels.

This approach would be a clear demonstration of Lowe's interest in providing customers with environmentally- responsible products and services, which is integral to your company's sustainability policy.

I look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

Sincerely,

Neil Bettez, Supervisor
Town of New Paltz

cc: Peter Lopez, Administrator EPA Region 2

Basil Seggos, Commissioner NYSDEC

Joel Tickner, Director Green Chemistry & Commerce Council