

Testimony Against H.130, a Bill Proposing to Ban Glyphosate in Vermont

Alan M. Robertson, Secretary, Vermont Woodlands Association

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My name is Alan Robertson. I'm a retired engineer and own 60 acres of well- managed forest in Sheffield, Vermont. I've been a member of the Vermont Woodlands Association (VWA) for over 25 years and have been the Secretary for over 15 years; I have also been the Co-Chair of the Vermont American Tree Farm System program for over ten years. I'm pleased to provide the following testimony on behalf VWA for educating the committee on the consequences of banning the use of glyphosate in Vermont.

VWA is a Non-Profit (501(c) (3)) association of approximately 1000 landowners and professional, licensed foresters dedicated to the health and enhancement of the working forest in Vermont. Through education, outreach, and advocacy we are a Voice for Healthy, Sustainable Forests in the Green Mountain State. VWA believes in the sustainable management of our private forests, but successful management today in the United States, and in Vermont in particular, requires the identification, management, prevention, and if possible, removal of invasive plants (trees, shrubs, flowers, and vines) from managed forest environments. Virtually every forestry and wildlife organization in the US, and every forestry and wildlife state public body recognize the threat and damage caused by invasives.

Vermont has been a leader in dealing with efforts to control plant invasives, and the one important tool in the control arsenal is the use of herbicides. Glyphosate is an extremely safe and effective herbicide for use against invasives, especially when they are beyond small infestations which might be controlled with mechanical measures. The use just described generally involves stump applications and limited small spraying operations. For larger areas it involves the hiring of a licensed applicator, and in the Tree Farm program the use must be part of an integrated pest management plan. Forestry applications do NOT include aerial spraying which, in any case, is against the law. Personal exposure to the chemical is quite limited and infrequent.

Most importantly, the loss of this important tool in the control of invasives would seriously threaten not just the management but the natural ecosystems of our forests, including the plants and wildlife associated with forests. Given the tenuous nature of the cancer research on glyphosate ("probable" carcinogen??), and the more serious damage which would happen from plant invasives if glyphosate is banned, VWA highly recommends a more rational, factual, quantitative approach to the evaluation of this herbicide, and no ban until such an investigation is complete.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide information,

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