



Hon. Bill Mauro
240 South Syndicate Avenue
Thunder Bay
P7E 1C8
Phone: [807-623-9237](tel:807-623-9237)
Email: bmauro.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

September 7th, 2015

Dear Minister Mauro,

I am writing on behalf of Citizens United for a Sustainable Planet (CUSP), a Thunder Bay based local citizens group. We request your immediate attention to concerns voiced by people across northern Ontario, and in particular our community Thunder Bay, that glyphosate spraying programs are continuing without the support of many local people. We have now collected nearly 1,000 signatures from citizens living in northern Ontario – including Thunder Bay, Atikokan, Kenora, Terrace Bay, Hearst, Constance Lake First Nation, Iroquois Falls and many others (attached). The petition they signed reads: “Stop the spraying of Monsanto's controversial VisionMax herbicide in the Boreal Forest in Canada.”

As you know, our forests are important to the health, spiritual well-being and socio-economic prosperity of the people of northern Ontario. We share these forests with each other – including the First Nations peoples whose traditional territories include *all* of the forests – and a wide range of other living beings. Forestry is only one activity occurring in public forests, valued by northern citizens but not to the exclusion of other activities and the health of the forests themselves.

Many forest management companies use glyphosate herbicides, including Monsanto's VisionMax, to reduce the growth of plants that compete with trees grown for logging. You support this spraying through the forest management planning process. Plans to spray Monsanto's VisionMax, and similar glyphosate-based herbicides, on Lake Nipigon, Black Spruce, Dog-River Matawin and other forests in Northwestern Ontario have been approved. Much of the spraying of forests directly coincides with peak blueberry season, leaving berry pickers and many wildlife species at risk of exposure to the herbicide.

While the full effects of VisionMax on humans and wildlife are not entirely known, negative impacts of these herbicides have been increasingly documented through scientific research. These effects include increased reproductive issues, possible DNA damage, and changes in some species abundance. The risks of the application of glyphosate-based herbicides during peak blueberry season are borne by Indigenous people and other local foragers, and wildlife, including moose and bears, which rely on these plants in their diets.

We are aware that Health Canada has approved the use of glyphosate for managing unwanted vegetation. Our concern is that your Ministry take public opposition to glyphosate spraying on publicly-owned forests seriously. This year, the World Health Organization stated glyphosate is *probably carcinogenic to humans* – published in the journal *The Lancet Oncology*¹. Local concern over herbicide spraying has been ongoing for two decades and has increased with this finding. It must not be ignored.

We report here some of the comments provided to us by local people as to why they want spraying on our public forests to stop.

I live here. I hunt here and I harvest the wild foods that grow here. (Ignace, Ontario)

Our forests belong to all of us, not just forest industry. We need to share our abundance, not rape it for profit. (Thunder Bay, Ontario)

I used to be a licenced pesticide applicator. I let my licence expire because I believe there are better ways to achieve our goals in forestry. (Thunder Bay, Ontario)

Il semble qu'on a pas retenu la leçon avec l'agent oranger des années 70. Protégez la santé des gens et évitez les futures recours collectifs qui coutent très cher, cessez ces pratiques douteuse. (Ontario)

I'm signing because blueberry picking is important to the people of this region, the bears also need berries for food. Without it they will head for garbage dumps and populated areas in their search. (Thunder Bay, Ontario)

Research indicates that pesticides containing glyphosate, including Vision Max and Roundup, are carcinogenic therefore their use as herbicides should be stopped. (Thunder Bay, Ontario)

“Probably carcinogenic” – no more reason needed not to do this. It’s not all about logging, it’s about a safe world, keeping a safe world, for all beings. (Mattawa, Ontario)

Forest ecosystems should be respected, along with the foods they provide. I pick blueberries every summer and store them for the winter. (Thunder Bay, Ontario)

...because it is irresponsible to spray pesticides over forests with complete disregard for all the other organisms that live there (including people). (Kakabeka Falls, Ontario)

I have the right to decide what is in and on my food and in the environment that I live in and no one should be able to choose for me. (Thunder Bay, Ontario)

Stop poisoning the people and wildlife of Ontario! Why do you think there are so many bear sightings? You’ve poisoned their food supply!!! (Thunder Bay, Ontario)

I am an Ojibway and I live in northwestern Ontario. I pick and store and eat blueberries all year round. (Thunder Bay, Ontario)

Alternatives to glyphosate spraying for controlling vegetation exist and are used in other jurisdictions. It is time to listen to citizens and implement alternatives. We look forward to hearing from you about this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Berger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Berger
Citizens United for a Sustainable Planet
paul.berger@lakeheadu.ca
[807-983-2333](tel:807-983-2333)

¹ Guyton, K. Z. et al. (2015) Carcinogenicity of tetrachlorvinphos, parathion, malathion, diazinon, and glyphosate. *The Lancet Oncology* 16(5), 490-491.