Dear Mr. Mayor:

The office of the Prime Minister has forwarded to me a copy of your correspondence of November 30, 2007, concerning a resolution by the City of Waterloo regarding the use and sale of cosmetic chemical pesticides.

Health Canada’s Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has a mandate to prevent unacceptable risks to people and the environment from the use of pest control products. Because there can be risks associated with their use, pesticides are among the most rigorously tested and regulated substances in the world. Under the Pest Control Products Act, if the Minister considers that the health and environmental risks and the value of a pest control product are acceptable based on a rigorous scientific evaluation, the Minister shall confirm the registration. In other words, if a pesticide meets the criteria of “acceptable risk” and value, regardless of whether it is for agricultural or lawn care use, registration must be granted.

A pest control product’s label is the final outcome of the detailed scientific assessment, communicating essential information for the safe use of the product, including hazard identification and mitigation measures as part of the registration process. In May 2006, the PMRA published the Formulants Policy and Implementation Guidance Document. This policy will ensure that formulants contained in pesticide products meet current standards, and that manufacturers label their products to disclose the presence of allergens and preservatives, helping to minimize the risks associated with pest control products.

The PMRA, in cooperation with provincial regulators, works to develop sustainable pest management practices. In the area of urban pesticide use, the Healthy Lawns Strategy was developed to encourage healthy lawn practices that help to avoid the need for pesticides. When pesticides are necessary, we encourage careful use of lower-risk products. In doing so, pest control benefits are maximized, while health and environmental risks are minimized. More information is available online at http://www.healthylawns.ca.
The sale, importation and advertisement of consumer chemical products are subject to the Consumer Chemicals and Containers Regulations, 2001 issued under the authority of the Hazardous Products Act (HPA). The purpose of the HPA and its associated regulations is to protect the health and safety of Canadians by prohibiting or regulating the sale, advertisement and importation of products that are, or are likely to be, hazardous. A project to review and modernize the HPA is currently underway that will improve protection of children and adults from environmental pollutants.

The Government of Canada recognizes that children are especially vulnerable to environmental risks. We are working with provincial and territorial partners to develop a national strategy to address environmental risks to children’s health in Canada. The Government is also working with non-governmental partners such as the Canadian Partnership on Child Health and Environment (CPCHE), a coalition of environmental, health and child care organizations. With this government’s support, the CPCHE will soon conclude a cross-Canada consultation process on children’s environmental health issues.

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Clement

c.c. Office of the Prime Minister