

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS SHEILA KUEHL AND
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Exploring Alternatives to the Use of Glyphosate for Vegetation Management

Glyphosate has been widely used by public and private entities nationwide for weed abatement. Prior to the March 19, 2019 Board Motion to halt the use of glyphosate by all County Departments, glyphosate-based products were used to manage vegetation on parks, trails, roadways, flood control facilities, County-owned buildings, vacant land, and other County properties.

There is a growing concern about the safety of glyphosate and its effects on human health. In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, an agency of the World Health Organization, classified glyphosate as “probably carcinogenic to humans”. In two recent California court cases, juries found that exposure to glyphosate caused cancer in two individuals. County residents living near previously-active glyphosate application sites have voiced concerns about its effects on human, animal, and environmental health.

The Department of Public Works, in conjunction with Public Health, Parks and Recreation, Beaches and Harbors, and the Agricultural Commission recently completed a 30-day report outlining early findings about the use of glyphosate-based products

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throughout the County. Alternative strategies to manage vegetation without using glyphosate-based products include hand clearing, mowing, flaming, hardscaping, mulching, grazing animals, and the use of organic products. Other jurisdictions utilize glyphosate in varying degrees, depending on the types of properties they manage. While some jurisdictions continue to use glyphosate without restriction, some have limited its use, while others have completely banned it. Until such time as this Board has received assurance that the proper use of glyphosate will not pose health risks, we must take action.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct all County Departments to ban the use of glyphosate-based products.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Public Works, in conjunction with County Counsel, the Departments of Public Health, Parks and Recreation, Beaches and Harbors, and the Agricultural Commission to:

1. Convene a panel of experts that may include hiring a consultant(s) to explore options for vegetation management, especially in areas where the use of traditional alternatives to glyphosate-based products is problematic due to challenges with access, safety, and habitat restoration;
2. Continue to solicit recommendations from the public on possible alternatives to the use of glyphosate-based products for vegetation management;
3. Report back to the Board on recommendations and any feasible alternatives for the control of vegetation management within 180 days.