



Conservation Council of New Brunswick
Conseil de conservation *du* Nouveau-Brunswick

www.conservationcouncil.ca

May 29, 2024

Hon. Blaine Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick
Hon. Mike Holland, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development

Re: Urgent Call for a Complete Ban on Glyphosate Spraying in New Brunswick Forests

I am writing on behalf of the Conservation Council of New Brunswick. We urge your government to take decisive action by implementing a complete ban on glyphosate spraying and the use of other harmful herbicides in our forests across New Brunswick.

Every year, forest management companies in New Brunswick spray glyphosate-based products over thousands of kilometres of forest. The use of this herbicide continues despite mounting opposition from the majority of New Brunswickers and various [petitions](#) calling for a ban.

Glyphosate is likely negatively affecting the health, resiliency, and biodiversity of Wabanaki (Acadian) forest watersheds. Using herbicides to kill deciduous trees and shrubs to promote coniferous plantations reduces [biodiversity](#) in our forests, which makes them more vulnerable to insect attacks, drought stress, and [wildfires](#). [Modelling](#) done by researchers from the University of New Brunswick found that coniferous trees will be severely impacted by climate change, meaning herbicide use to promote coniferous forests will only amplify the impacts of climate change on the Wabanaki forest.

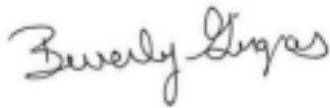
Additionally, several studies have linked glyphosate to [cancer](#), [hormone disruption](#), and neurological diseases such as [Parkinson's](#). Bayer (and previously Monsanto) lost numerous multibillion-dollar [lawsuits](#) that link the use of herbicides containing glyphosate to cancer. A similar [class action](#) lawsuit against Bayer was launched on behalf of Canadians in December 2023.

Contrary to industry claims, alternatives to glyphosate are not only available but have also been successfully implemented elsewhere. Quebec stopped using herbicides in forestry over 20 years ago. West Fraser, one of Canada's largest forestry companies, recently [announced](#) that it will no longer apply herbicides as part of its silviculture practices in British Columbia and is working to find alternatives to herbicide use in other areas where it operates. It's clear that forest management does not need herbicide use to be economical. New Brunswick taxpayers fund these large forestry companies' silviculture programs, including spraying, which the auditor general determined in a 2015 report costs the public

around \$29 million annually. While we believe taxpayers should not be funding these profitable industries, with over \$44 million budgeted for forestry activities in the 2024-25 budget, the public at least deserves to have a say in how this money is used.

We are also troubled by the lack of consultation with Indigenous communities in our province, with some indicating that spraying glyphosate herbicides is “[akin to eco genocide](#).” The continued use of these products in New Brunswick forests is a form of environmental racism as they impact the well-being of Indigenous peoples and their inherent rights to practice their culture. The Canadian Human Rights Commission defines [environmental racism](#) as “a form of systemic racism that results in the disproportionate proximity and greater exposure of Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities to polluting industries and environmentally hazardous activities.” In the context of environmental justice, it is critical that the government rethink its policy on the use of herbicides and ban the use of products with glyphosate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beverly Gingras".

Beverly (Bev) Gingras
Executive Director
Conservation Council of New Brunswick

CC: Susan Holt, Leader of the Opposition; David Coon, Leader of the Green Party; Alex White, Leader of the New Democratic Party