Glyphosate approval process exposed as corrupt

By DALLAS McQuARRIE

A new study details how Monsanto, a company that manufactures glyphosate-based products, used deceit and manipulation to have the chemical herbicide declared safe.

The scientific article, published in the August 2018 edition of the Journal of Public Health Policy, documents how Monsanto attempted to manipulate scientific evidence for its own business interests.

The study, by Dr. Sheldon Krimsky and Carey Gilliam, uses documents from 3,500 lawsuits against Monsanto and information obtained through the U.S. Freedom of Information Act. Krimsky and Gilliam show that Monsanto engaged in the “ghost writing” of scientific articles, interfered in the reporting of test data by a scientific journal, prepared presentations for supposedly “independent” scientists, and exercised “undue influence on [the American] regulatory agency” that approved the use of glyphosate.

New Brunswick government and forest industry spokespersons, despite compelling evidence to the contrary, continue to say that glyphosate is not a threat to public health.

The best-known glyphosate product is the herbicide Roundup, which is used in agriculture, VisionMax, Forza and Weedmaster are glyphosate-based products used in forestry.

Roundup is also the central issue in the 3,500 lawsuits against Monsanto. Krimsky and Gilliam note that, in every case, the individuals suing Monsanto say that “she or he, or their loved ones, developed non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma due to Roundup exposure. Moreover, the plaintiffs allege that Monsanto had long covered up the risks of the glyphosate-based herbicide.”

The glyphosate scandal erupted in March 2015 when the World Health Organization’s International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) determined that glyphosate was a probable cause of cancer and reported “strong” evidence that glyphosate caused DNA and chromosomal damage in human cells.

The glyphosate-cancer link was brought to the attention of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly by Green Party leader David Coon. Coon’s opposition to dangerous herbicides and defoliants dates back to the mid-1980s.

Party leader David Coon. Coon’s opposition to dangerous herbicides and defoliants dates back to the mid-1980s. The pressure mounted in 2016 when he encouraged people to contact John Ames, the Tourism, Culture and Heritage Minister, and ask all parties to “go back to the drawing board.”

Biggs clarified that the master plan made available to the public did not mention the destruction of several defining features.

Attendees denounced city council’s unanimous support for the plans, plans that Biggs said misled the public.

Beth Biggs, a spokesperson for the newly formed citizens’ group, Save Officer’s Square. “We don’t culturally designate parking lots,” said Biggs.

The importance of Officer’s Square’s trees and heritage to Fredericton residents was palpable at the June 22nd press conference where residents demanded a halt to developments currently underway at the site. Residents also decried city council’s handling of the revitalization plans for the downtown historic site.

“When we walk into that space, it is an experience,” said Beth Biggs, a spokesperson for the newly formed citizens’ group, Save Officer’s Square. “We don’t culturally designate parking lots,” added Biggs.

“Nowhere in the plan was the removal of the fence, the widening of St. Anne Point’s Drive, the taking of land, the destruction of trees (i... a large stage that would obstruct the view of the river,” said Biggs.

Walter Learning, theatre director, actor and founder of Theatre New Brunswick, received applause for speaking against the stage plans. He referred to staging options that would work better within the existing space.

Chris Smissera, a forester, who called himself “an unabashed treehugger,” said that the city should work with the trees. He received appreciation from the crowd when he encouraged people to contact John Ames, the Tourism, Culture and Heritage Minister, and ask all parties to “go back to the drawing board.”

The city of Fredericton acquired Officer’s Square from the province of New Brunswick in 2017. Any changes to the defining features of the provincially-designated heritage site must receive approval from the province.

In a Facebook post, Fredericton South MLA David Coon declared that, “Minister John Ames is the final

By TRACY GLYNN

Spraying in New Brunswick’s forests continues, almost two years after the petition against glyphosate spraying was presented by David Coon, New Brunswick Green Party Leader and Fredericton South MLA, in the New Brunswick Legislature on Dec. 6, 2016. Photo by Nick Hawkins.

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Biggs and other spokespersons noted the site’s 19th century decorative cast iron fence, vista of the Wolastoq (St. John River), large mature trees and open green spaces as just some of the defining features that deserve preservation.

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It’s time for a higher N.B. minimum wage

By JEAN-CLAUDE BASQUE

It is time for New Brunswick to increase its minimum wage. And contrary to the view of opponents, there are many convincing arguments for adopting this policy change.

Consider that for the past 15 years, the number of workers at minimum wage has fluctuated between six and ten percent of New Brunswick’s labour force. The majority of these workers have always been women. The percentage of teenagers, however, has decreased over the years, which means that almost sixty per cent of today’s minimum-wage workers are twenty years old and older.

The salary of minimum-wage workers has constantly under the poverty line. Many of their living conditions required to meet. As a result, they are not sustained. As 90 per cent of workers at the minimum wage are not unionized, their workplace falls under basic employment standards adopted by the provincial government. These standards are really basic and do not provide much coverage.

Per the provincial government’s Unemployment Standards Act and Regulations, most minimum-wage workers don’t have sick leave, child care, family responsibilities or compassionate care paid leave. They are only paid time-and-a-half of the minimum wage for hours worked after 44 hours during a work week. They get paid per-cent overtime pay if they work less than eight years and six per cent vacation pay after eight years.

Most of the time, workers must pay for their required uniforms that are not paid. In the Regulations that the employer must provide them.

Each time there is talk of increasing the minimum wage or bringing forward better employment standards, we hear strong voices from the business community opposing these changes. One of their main arguments is that raising the minimum wage causes businesses cannot absorb the cost and there will be job losses.

When we check this argument against the facts, we get a completely different picture. Indeed, between 2008 and 2018, the number of minimum-wage workers increased 12 times and the sky has not fallen. Further research into Statistics Canada’s database on the number of businesses indicates that for small and medium-sized businesses, the number of employees has increased.

This certainly goes against the myth that minimum wage increases are job killers. The same data shows that job losses are more likely to occur in large enterprises that employed 500 workers or more. This situation can be explained

in part by the decline of our industrial base, especially in the forestry sector, with the closing of pulp and paper mills and sawmills, the 2008-09 financial crisis, and the fluctuation of the Canadian dollar, but certainly not by increases to the minimum wage.

Raising the minimum wage brings a wide range of benefits for workers and their families, as well as for employers and the economy of the province.

Higher wages will result in a lower turnover rate, which saves money for employers. Employees with higher wages will stay longer and become more knowledgeable and confident; therefore, they will increase their productivity.

Higher wages also means these workers, who have more money in their pockets, are more likely to spend it in their local economy since workers at minimum wage aren’t likely to be going out of the country on vacation or investing in cars. Increasing a worker’s minimum wage will increase consumption in the economy, which will translate into more economic growth for the community and the province.

A minimum wage increase is a win-win situation, since it helps not only the employee, but also the employer and the economy.

Hopefully, the province will follow the lead of Alberta, Ontario and now British Colombia and plan right now to increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour. It should also review our employment standards to reflect the ever-changing needs of workers and their families. Most importantly, we need to increase the long way towards reducing poverty in our province, the core goal of the province’s Poverty Reduction Plan.

Jean-Claude Basque is provincial coordinator for the NB Common Front for Social Justice.

Glycophosphate approval process exposed as corrupt

In December 2016, Coon proposed legislation to amend the Growers and Food Act. Coon proposed to introduce clear-cutting and glyphosate spraying with ecological sustainability, fairness for private woodland owners and independent sawmill operators, and acknowledgment of the rights of First Nations. The Liberals and Conservatives did not support the bill.

Robichaud notes that “Coon has been fighting glyphosate spraying and toxic waste” and adds he didn’t trust the other parties to support a glyphosate ban. He said, “What is needed now is to stop the use of glyphosate is a class action lawsuit. It’s based on evidence based on the final flawed Canadian approval process.”

Rod Cumberland is a wildlife biologist concerned about the presence of glyphosate in food. He is not satisfied with the provincial government’s potential to the potential dangers of a chemical the World Health Organization says probably causes cancer.

“The people of New Brunswick should care enough about the health and welfare that they demanded the New Brunswick government—specifically the Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health—begin to test for glyphosate residues in our foods, as well as test for its presence in the wildlife we consume and the farm products and meats sold to [New Brunswickers] as well as test for its presence in the wildlife we consume and the farm products and meats sold to New Brunswickers as healthy products, rather than allowing “them to take a ‘wait and see’ approach,” Cumberland said.

“The health and safety of New Brunswick residents should be important enough that we are offered a proactive, rather than a reactive, approach by our elected officials,” Cumberland added.

Dallas MacQuarrie covers the environment for Cfin.org Territory in Kent County.

Masuma Khan: Building Solidarity and Resilience

While Supported by Fragility

Masuma Khan will share her experiences with racism and leadership as a student leader at Dalhousie University when she spoke in solidarity with indigenous people in 2017. Masuma Khan delivered a talk at the NB Media Co-op’s ninth annual members’ meeting on Sept. 19 at 7:00pm at Tilley Hall, Room 302, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton.

info@nbmediacoop.org

Contact: info@nbmediacoop.org.


Tuesday, Sept. 25 at 7:00pm Ted Daigle Auditorium, Edmund Casey Hall, St. Thomas University.

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