



The Brief

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Glyphosate approval process exposed as corrupt

By DALLAS McQUARRIE



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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.

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 Krinsky and Carey Gilliam, uses documents from 3,500 lawsuits against Monsanto and information obtained through the U.S. Freedom of Information Act. Krinsky 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. Krinsky 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 when he was opposing the provincial government’s use of the cancer-causing Agent Orange.

Monsanto feared the IARC would link glyphosate to cancer,

even before the IARC report was published. Krinsky and Gilliam note a February 2015 internal email by Monsanto scientist William Heydens that “discussed with colleagues various papers the company wanted to see published to counter what the company expected the IARC to find.”

The fact that Monsanto was clearly convinced well ahead of time that the IARC would find glyphosate to be a cause of cancer raises questions about what internal data Monsanto had and whether it knew that the chemical caused cancer.

In his e-mail, Monsanto’s Heydens suggests that they “ghostwrite” sections of a scientific paper that was being prepared by other researchers, and adds, “we would be keeping the cost down by us doing the writing and they would just edit and sign their names.” That deception worked, and Krinsky and Gilliam note that this Monsanto-ghostwritten paper “has been cited hundreds of times” and was “referenced by the [U.S.] Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in its finding... that glyphosate was ‘not likely’ carcinogenic.”

As well, in an internal memo by Monsanto scientist David Saltmiras, he admits that he “ghost wrote cancer review paper Greim et al. (2015),” a document also cited by the EPA in its 2016 decision that glyphosate was safe for human use.

In 2016, Monsanto hired the firm Intertek Scientific & Regulatory Consultancy to write articles discrediting the World Health Organization’s research linking glyphosate to cancer. Intertek initially denied contact by Monsanto, but court documents cited by Krinsky and Gilliam show those denials were lies. In fact, as Krinsky and Gilliam note, “the documents demonstrate Monsanto was engaged in organizing, reviewing, and editing the drafts, even arguing with one of the authors and overruling him about language in the manuscript.”

The Krinsky-Gilliam article cites “internal Monsanto documents [that] show that Monsanto officials directed and organized a campaign to pressure” another journal into withdrawing a peer-reviewed paper showing harmful effects to animals exposed to Roundup.

Monsanto also gave Wallace Hayes, the editor-in-chief of the scientific journal *Food and Chemical Toxicology*, a secret \$400 an hour consulting contract. Hayes never declared the conflict of interest.

The Krinsky-Gilliam article details how “Monsanto officials developed presentations for academic scientists

“We don’t culturally designate parking lots:” Save Officer’s Square spokesperson

By TRACY GLYNN

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.

Biggs and other spokespeople 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.

Attendees denounced city council’s unanimous support for the plans, plans that Biggs said misled the public. Biggs clarified that the master plan made available to the public did not mention the destruction of several defining features.

“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 (. . .) 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 Smissaert, 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



Beth Biggs, spokesperson of Save Officer’s Square, speaking about the problems with the city of Fredericton’s public consultation on Officer’s Square at a press conference on June 22. Photo by Tracy Glynn.

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 the 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 fallen under the poverty line. Working conditions offered to minimum wage workers are outdated. 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.

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

Most of the time, workers must pay for their required uniforms since there is no mention 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 small and medium-sized 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 province has increased the minimum wage 12 times and the sky has not fallen. Further research into Statistics Canada’s database on the number of employees by enterprise size reveals that for small and medium-sized businesses, the number of employees has increased in the last ten years.

This certainly goes against the myth that minimum wage increases are job killers. The same data shows that job losses occurred 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.

First and foremost, any increase to the minimum wage puts more dollars in workers’ pockets. Minimum-wage workers and their families are struggling to provide for their basic needs. The cost of food, heating and rent increases every year. These are not luxuries; they are everyday necessities.

Extra income would enable workers to provide more necessities rather than having to choose what essential needs will have to be sacrificed. Not only does the family unit benefit from having a decent revenue, but the entire community benefits as well. Community services such as food banks, soup kitchens, school breakfast programs, and housing programs won’t be run thin on resources. There will be a decrease in the need for government help such as subsidies.

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 RRSPs. Increasing a worker’s minimum wage will increase consumption in the economy, which will translate into more economic growth for the community and the region.

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 Columbia and plan right now to increase our 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 certainly, these two actions would go a 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.

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“We don’t culturally designate parking lots:” Save Officer’s Square spokesperson

decision-maker on what happens in Officers’ Square’s character-defining elements.”

Coon noted, “Minister Ames has required the City to submit a development plan. Permission was granted to alter the following character-defining characteristics: demolition of the wall along the eastern perimeter and the removal of five adjacent trees. No further character-defining elements are to be altered until Minister Ames receives the final development plan from the City, following its public consultation on Tuesday June 26th at the Delta Hotel and renders his decision on that plan.”

Marie Perley, with the Maliseet Advisory Committee on Archeology, said her committee’s concerns over the plans were not addressed. She has registered complaints with the ministers responsible for culture and heritage at both the provincial and federal levels.

Mayor Mike O’Brien told CBC on June 21st that “Officers’ Square has been well researched, thought out. It was endorsed by the downtown business network, it was endorsed by city council, it’s been reported heavily in the media.”

City councilors have also defended the plan, saying that the site is long overdue for infrastructure upgrades. According to John McDermid, Ward 10 City Councillor, the city has to catch up on the Square’s neglect by the province over the years. He feels that there was considerable public consultation over the past two years on the city’s master plan for Officer’s Square.

“In the end Officers’ Square will be far better suited for hosting festivals and the multitude of events held in the space throughout the year. A refrigerated skating loop will be installed which will extend the skating season to four to five months. Last year there were only 12 days of skating there. A performance stage is planned for the North West corner of the space and infrastructure in the back parking lot will be upgraded to allow vendors to set up during special events,” said McDermid in an email.

Tracy Glynn is an editorial board member of the NB Media Co-op.

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to deliver at seminars and other public forums,” despite the fact that “scientists who present their findings at scientific meetings are generally expected to disclose any conflicts of interest, as well as any collaborators.” Monsanto did this “in multiple instances involving multiple professors.”

Not content with using tame scientists, Monsanto also worked closely with at least three EPA officials in the United States “to derail a review of glyphosate by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) that was underway in 2015.” Monsanto’s fear was that the ATSDR review “would find carcinogenicity concerns with glyphosate just as IARC had.”

Cocagne resident and long-time anti-glyphosate activist Serge Robichaud said Coon “was the only party leader seriously opposed to it during the last provincial election in 2014, and he has shown his commitment to banning glyphosate during his time in office.”

In December 2016, Coon proposed legislation to amend the Crown Lands and Forests Act. Coon proposed to replace clear-cutting and glyphosate spraying with ecological sustainability, fairness for private woodlot owners and independent sawmill operators, and acknowledgment of Aboriginal rights. The Liberals and Conservatives did not support the bill.

Robichaud notes that “Coon has been fighting glyphosate spraying for many years,” and adds he doesn’t trust the other parties to support a glyphosate ban. He said, “What is needed now to stop the use of glyphosate is a class action lawsuit against the federal government based on the very 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 approach to the potential dangers of a chemical the World Health Organization says

probably causes cancer.

“The people of New Brunswick should care enough about their health and welfare that they demand 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 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 McQuarrie covers the environment from Mi’kmaq territory in Kent County.

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NB Media Co-op
180 St. John St., Fredericton, NB E3B 4A9
Email: info@nbmediacoop.org, Website: nbmediacoop.org
f NB Media Co-op t @nbmediaco-op

Community Calendar

To list your community event, email **info@nbmediacoop.org**. For an updated listing of events, check **nbmediacoop.org**.

NB Media Co-op’s 9th Annual Members’ Meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 19 at 5:00pm.
Grad House, Upstairs,
676 Windsor St., Fredericton.
All are welcome but you must be a member to vote.

[RSVP at info@nbmediacoop.org](mailto:info@nbmediacoop.org)

Masuma Khan: Building Solidarity and Resilience While Surrounded by Fragility. Masuma Khan will share her experiences with racism and censorship as a student leader at Dalhousie University when she spoke in solidarity with indigenous people in 2017. Masuma Khan will deliver the keynote at the NB Media Co-op’s ninth annual members’ meeting on Sept. 19 at 7:00pm at Tilley Hall, Room 102, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton. Contact: info@nbmediacoop.org.



I Am Rohingya: A Genocide in Four Acts. A film about a play by Rohingya youth. With film director, Yusuf Zine. Tuesday, Sept. 25 at 7:00pm Ted Daigle Auditorium, Edmund Casey Hall, St. Thomas University.