

POLITICS

County to study use of glyphosate, weedkiller linked to cancer concerns



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Ventura

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Under a new directive, officials will study use of the weedkiller glyphosate on property of the Ventura County government and identify strategies to end the practice.

The instruction Tuesday from the Ventura County Board of Supervisors requires county managers to report their findings in 90 days.

“Let’s up our game,” said Supervisor Linda Parks, who recommended the study.

The supervisors’ 4-0 vote comes at a time of mounting litigation over the safety of the herbicide and conflicting research findings on cancer risk. Glyphosate is the active ingredient in the commercial products Roundup and Rodeo.

Managers will be examining how the product is used on public property owned by the county and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, which maintains dams, channels and debris basins. Departments involved in the study include those overseeing county airports, Channel Islands Harbor and parks. The directive does not affect private property, where the use of glyphosate is controlled by the state, county officials said.

Last month, a San Francisco jury [awarded \\$80 million to a California man](#) who sued manufacturer Monsanto over the non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma he tied to his use of Roundup. A different jury awarded another California man with the disease \$289 million last summer, but a judge slashed the award to \$78 million. Both decisions are being appealed, USA TODAY reported.

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‘We ought to take a look at it’

Glyphosate is probably carcinogenic to humans, the World Health Organization’s International Agency for Research on Cancer declared in 2015. Bayer, which acquired Monsanto last year, says a large body of research shows it is safe when used as directed.

State pesticide regulators allowed glyphosate to be used in California based on a draft federal finding that it was not likely to be carcinogenic, Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner Ed Williams said after the supervisors’ vote.

“We ought to take a look at it,” he said of the board’s decision. “It doesn’t hurt to take a look at it.”

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Parks said more than 50 cities and counties in the U.S. have banned glyphosate.

The Oak Park Unified School District stopped using the substance more than 15 years ago, Superintendent Tony Knight said in an email urging county supervisors to conduct the study. The Rancho Simi Recreation & Park District has suspended use of the weedkiller in parks adjoining the local schools, he said.

Several members of the public who commented on Parks’ proposal asked the board to stop using the products now. Parks said she did not think that could be done immediately because the county has contracts that include their use, but that she considered the study a good approach.

Effective Monday, the watershed district stopped using the herbicide on trails accessible to the public. That occurred after a cyclist complained about a sprayer that emitted a product that contains glyphosate, district Director Glenn Shephard said.

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