

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

--MEMORANDUM--



The City Beautiful

TO: Mayor and City Commission
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

FROM: Commissioner Patricia Keon

DATE: May 14, 2019

SUBJECT: The use of glyphosate-based herbicides in the City of Coral Gables.

Glyphosate is an effective weed-killing ingredient in many popular herbicides for lawns, gardens, and in agriculture. Although glyphosate-based herbicides are popular, recent studies have put its use into question. Extensive use and exposure of glyphosate-based herbicides have been found to increase the risk of Non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL), an immune system cancer, by 41%. Earlier this year the US District Court in San Francisco ruled in favor of a groundskeeper who was diagnosed with NHL and extensively used Roundup, a glyphosate-based herbicide. It determined that its extensive use was a substantial factor in causing his NHL. In 2018 a California superior court reached a similar verdict in favor of another groundskeeper with NHL that also used Roundup. Both cases were filed against Monsanto for its failure to include a label warning of Roundup's cancer-causing risk. In 2017, in Indiana, glyphosate was found to be significantly correlated with shortened pregnancies and in Argentina, in 2018, it was found that those with extensive exposure to glyphosate were linked to higher rates of spontaneous abortions and congenital abnormalities in children.

The use of glyphosate and the health risks associated with its exposure have recently raised the question: should there be a continued use of glyphosate-based herbicides? The EPA has found no health risks in using glyphosate and it does not consider it a carcinogen to humans. However, the World Health Organization classified it as a probable human carcinogen and California has added it to its list of cancer-causing chemicals. The Cities of Miami, Miami Beach, and Stuart have banned the use of glyphosate-based herbicides by employees and contractors on all city owned properties to reduce the risk to human health and the environment. We should consider similar legislation and reconsider the use of glyphosate in the City and explore an alternative, such as high percentage vinegars, herbicidal soaps, or any safe alternative recommended by City Staff.