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Maine Dept. of Transportation

16 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
Commissioner, David Bernhardt
Chief Engineer, Joyce Noel Taylor
Director, Environmental Protection, Judy Gates
Vegetation Manager, Bob Moosmann
Director, Community Services Division, Peter Coughlan

Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection, 17 SHS
Surface Water Ambient Toxics Monitoring, Barry Mower
Watershed Planning and Management, Donald Witherill

Board of Pesticide Control, 28 SHS

Mary Tomlinson
Raymond Connors

RE: Water pollution from broad roadside spraying

I am writing in response to Roadside Spraying of herbicides and pesticides in Waldo County, and in the state of Maine.

On October 17, 2017 I came upon DOT workers standing in a truckbed spraying herbicide onto the 137 roadside in Freedom from a very large hose. They were about 50 yards from the Sebasticook River Watershed sign.

My friends who walk along this roadside with their children and dogs, the pollinators and wildlife should not be exposed to Herbicides and Pesticides. Broad spraying of the entire roadside affects all life that comes in contact with that roadside. Application from a hose can also drift into cars and onto motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians. The run-off takes these chemicals into streams, rivers and the ocean affecting all life along the way.

In the interest of public health and safety, our children, wildlife, and water quality, please reconsider putting these chemicals into our environment and please consider these other methods :

- fabric mulch that kills the plants because they can't get sunlight**
- planting low-growing native wildflowers and plants after mulch has killed the unwanted plants**
- horticultural white vinegar as an herbicide**
- with saplings, simply cutting them**
- if spraying is done, spot spray**
- Bareblaster weedburner**
- give towns the choice to use better methods along the State highways that are within the Town boundaries**

I realize that cost is a factor in a more labor intensive method. Consider training inmates in the Maine State prison system to learn about environmentally sound methods and to do the work of cutting, mulching, planting, applying vinegar. The roadsides are also littered with trash. Perhaps with each stretch of roadside that litter could be picked up as well. The amount of plastic that ends up in the ocean is another cause for concern. Also, if towns can take on the responsibility for state roads local residents who want a cleaner environment can volunteer their time and service.

I read the Maine Sunday Telegram article about Bob Moosman and am grateful to him for not spraying by organic farms, his concern for the pollinators and his ideas about replacing troublesome plants with native wild plants, however, I wonder if other methods of plant suppression have been considered for the clover and invasive plants, such as fabric mulch, instead of spraying toxic chemicals.

And in another MST article about the Painted Turtle whose habitat has been disturbed by a Toll Booth, DOT workers in southern Maine are walking the roads in an attempt to save turtles that have been damaged by cars and trucks. If they are poisoned by herbicides and pesticides that are broadly sprayed on the roadsides what then ?

From the Bangor Daily News:

*Penobscot County SWCD works closely with the Bangor Area Storm Water Group to help spread the word to residents, that in the Bangor Area, "Most of your neighbors don't use lawn chemicals, such as fertilizers and pesticides, on their lawns. Join your neighbors in helping to protect our families and community by reducing your use of lawn chemicals. **Volunteers visit neighborhoods spreading that message by stenciling pavement near storm drains to remind residents that stormwater flows unfiltered to streams and the Penobscot River.***

In 2015, the World Health Organization declared glyphosate (RoundUp) a probable carcinogen, which spurred a class action lawsuit brought by hundreds of victims who developed cancer after being exposed to the chemical.

In the interest of public health and safety, the wildlife who have no voice and the quality of our environment please consider methods that are more sustainable. I am surprised that this broad spraying of roadsides is still legal .

Sincerely
B.K. Keller
Northport, Maine

"Externally, the universe supports our physical survival. Photosynthesis in plants and plankton in the ocean produce the oxygen that we need to breathe. It is important to respect the laws that rule the physical universe because violation of these laws threatens our survival. When we pollute the ocean or destroy plant life we are destroying our support system and so are destroying ourselves." Marianne Williamson