



August 23, 2018

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health
House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Subject : Did Monsanto have a hand in Health Canada's pesticide evaluation?

Dear Minister:

An [American judge ruled](#) last week that some of Canada's top-selling pesticides contributed to an American citizen's cancer, and that Monsanto knowingly covered up the risks. It was only last year that you said that the active ingredient in these pesticides - glyphosate - did not pose any unacceptable risks to Canadians. Surely, this [court case verdict](#) is urging you to reconsider this conclusion.

It is not just the verdict that should have you concerned, however. The [court case unsealed documents](#) that reveal that Monsanto has ghost-written fake science, downplaying the cancer risk of its product while knowing the real risks for decades. Monsanto invests heavily in its internal department -- "Freedom to Operate"-- with a mandate to counter any science, scientists and regulators that expose glyphosate's cancer-causing potential.

[Internal documents](#) reveal that Monsanto negotiated directly with US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) scientists to downplay its cancer risk assessment. US EPA officials went out of their way to gain approval for Monsanto while detracting other scientists from investigating the link between glyphosate and cancer. An investigation has been filed at the US Department of Justice as a result of this behaviour that falls well beyond the bounds of US EPA policies and guidelines.

This is not only an American issue. Health Canada's evaluation of glyphosate [was conducted cooperatively with the US EPA](#), and relied heavily on research produced by Monsanto to draw its conclusion.

In July 2017, Équiterre and its partners filed a notice of objection with Health Canada on its evaluation of glyphosate, raising concerns that the evaluation either failed to consider and even dismissed important scientific evidence on risks to public health and ecosystems.



With the court's unsealed evidence and the verdict itself, we urge you to reconsider your ministry's 2017 decision to re-authorize glyphosate for use in Canada for another 15 years. It is no longer possible to confidently conclude that glyphosate does not pose unacceptable risks to our health.

Convince Canadians that they can rest assured that your decision is not Monsanto's, but rather, based on credible scientific evidence as both your government demands in law and policy and our citizenry deserves.

[Germany](#), [France](#) and [Austria](#) are all making moves to severely restrict or ban glyphosate within the next 3-5 years. We urge you to reopen Canada's evaluation of glyphosate, develop an expert panel of independent scientists to review it, and then decide anew if glyphosate is safe enough to be used in Canada. Further, we request that you launch an internal investigation into the validity of the documents used by Health Canada, and into its process and its collaboration with the EPA as well as with Monsanto to determine if Monsanto, Health Canada and Canadian civil servants acted illegally in the process of re-authorizing glyphosate.

The credibility of your pesticide assessments -- not to mention our health -- is at risk if you don't act quickly.

Sincerely yours,

Executive Director,
Sidney Ribaux
Équiterre

Project Manager - Pesticides and Toxic Substances,
Karen Ross
Équiterre