

Environment & Energy

New York to Ban Glyphosate Use on State Properties in New Rules

By Zach Bright

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- Exempt from some uses with low threat of human exposure
 - Municipalities in at least 28 states have restrictions
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Weedkillers that use glyphosate would be banned from use on New York state properties under a proposal announced Wednesday by the state's Department of Environmental Conservation.

The proposed regulation would implement a 2020 law that amended New York's Environmental Conservation Law to restrict glyphosate, a common herbicide found in Roundup. State departments, agencies, public benefit corporations, and any contractors would be prohibited from applying glyphosate-based pesticides on state properties in most circumstances.

"I commend our staff for developing this important proposal and crafting a strategy that provides for the targeted use of these compounds under specific and limited circumstances to further protect water quality and the environment," said Basil Seggos, commissioner of the state's environmental department.

Glyphosate has no risks to human health when it's used as directed by its label, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. But the International Agency for Research on Cancer in 2015 classified the chemical as "probably carcinogenic to humans."

Roundup, subject to at least 125,000 lawsuits from users claiming the weedkiller caused their cancers, announced last year to end litigation it will replace its glyphosate-based products beginning in 2023.

New York's proposed regulation includes exemptions for glyphosate-based pesticide uses with little to no threat of direct human exposure. Those include maintaining critical infrastructure, managing roadside vegetation, controlling invasive species, and researching alternatives.

The state environmental department said it will also collect new data to determine glyphosate product quantities used on state property and their potential impacts.

Municipalities in at least 28 states—including California, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, and Massachusetts—have restricted glyphosate usage. In 2018, California added the chemical to its Proposition 65 list of chemicals that could potentially cause cancer or birth defects.

Last year, New York restricted and reclassified the use of certain insecticides to prevent potentially harmful exposure to honeybees, the release added. The new glyphosate regulation will be heard in a virtual public hearing on Aug. 17 and will remain open for comment until Aug. 22.

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