

# City of Philadelphia



## Council of the City of Philadelphia Office of the Chief Clerk Room 402, City Hall Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 250397)

### RESOLUTION

A Resolution Authorizing The Committee on Labor and Civil Service and The Committee on Parks and Recreation to Hold Joint Hearings Investigating the City's Enforcement of the Healthy Outdoor Public Spaces (HOPS) Law and the Risks That Exposure to Synthetic Pesticides Pose to the Public and City Employees.

WHEREAS, On September 10, 2020, Councilmember Cindy Bass introduced Bill #200425-A, amending Title 6 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Health Code," by creating a new Chapter 6-1300 entitled "Healthy Outdoor Public Spaces," to promote a healthy environment that protects the public from the risks of toxic herbicides; and

WHEREAS, The legislation was unanimously passed by City Council on December 3, 2020, and was returned to Council unsigned by Mayor Kenney on January 28, 2021. Pursuant to Section 2-202 of the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, the Ordinance became law, and became effective on January 28, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Scientific studies conducted by the World Health Organization, the National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council, among others, have linked exposure to toxic herbicides with asthma, cancer, developmental and learning disabilities, nerve and immune system damage, liver and kidney damage, reproductive impairment, birth defects, and disruption of the endocrine system and the microbiome; and

WHEREAS, In the almost four years since the legislation has been effective, six civil cases have been filed and argued in Philadelphia courts against Bayer, the maker of RoundUp, a glyphosate-based herbicide, leading to five successful cases against the pesticide manufacturer, resulting in billions of dollars in damages; and

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## *RESOLUTION NO. 250397 continued*

WHEREAS, In 2023, according to information from Philadelphia's Department of Parks and Recreation, the department applied 3,911.23 liquid gallons, or 15.64 tons of toxic synthetic herbicides to 10,659,902.96 square feet of public grounds in violation of the HOPS law. The Department doubled its application of the carcinogenic herbicide glyphosate-based products to public spaces, from 2.3 tons in 2022 to 5.45 tons in 2023, revealing a disturbing trend; and

WHEREAS, Asthma hospitalization rates are three times higher in Philadelphia than in the rest of Pennsylvania, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Where the national average rates for childhood asthma is 5.8%, it is over 21% in Philadelphia. Synthetic pesticide exposure has been linked to an increased risk of developing asthma, exacerbate a previous asthmatic condition or even trigger asthma attacks by increasing bronchial hyper-responsiveness; and

WHEREAS, The National Cancer Institute estimates that Philadelphia has the highest cancer rate of any large city in the United States. 541 people per 100,000 in Philadelphia will get cancer, compared to 442 per 100,000 in the United States and 494 per 100,000 in Pennsylvania. Pesticides have been linked to several types of cancer, including non-Hodgkin lymphoma, multiple myeloma, prostate, kidney, lung, leukemia, bladder, colon, breast and pancreatic cancers; and

WHEREAS, Children, infants, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems and chemical sensitivities are especially vulnerable to toxic herbicides. According to the National Pesticide Information Center, infants may also be exposed to more pesticide than adults because they take more breaths per minute and have more skin surface relative to their body weight. Children often spend more time closer to the ground, touching baseboards and lawn where pesticides may have been applied. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that children age 6-11 have higher levels of common pesticides in their bodies than adults. Pesticide exposure early in life is associated with increased risk of certain cancers, birth defects, reproductive defects, asthma, and cognitive and behavioral problems; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADLEPHIA, Authorizing The Committee on Labor and Civil Service and The Committee on Parks and Recreation to hold joint hearings investigating the dangers posed by continued applications and exposures to toxic synthetic herbicides and the city's compliance with the Healthy Outdoor Public Spaces law.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty fourth day of April, 2025.

Kenyatta Johnson  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Harrity

Sponsored by: Council President Johnson, Councilmembers Harrity, Ahmad, Bass, Brooks, Gauthier, Gilmore Richardson, Johnson, Landau, Lozada, O'Neill, O'Rourke, Phillips, Squilla, Thomas and Young