

## Start Your Own Local Movement

Whether your state has preemption or not, you can still work to get toxics out of your community. It takes a lot of work and commitment, but it can be done with some perseverance. It's important to find support – friends, neighbors, and other people who share your concerns about environmental health. (See Beyond Pesticides' State pages ([bit.ly/BPstates](http://bit.ly/BPstates)) for local environmental organizations.) It's also essential to reach out to your local politicians and government. We have several factsheets available to help you organize in your community, which can be found at [www.beyondpesticides.org/lawn/activist](http://www.beyondpesticides.org/lawn/activist).

## How to Talk to Your Neighbors

1. **Emphasize human health.**
2. **Stress cost-savings.**
3. **Use reasonable language.**
4. **Keep it simple.**
5. **Follow up.**

## Key Points of Focus

1. **Children, elderly, and those with existing health problems.** Pesticides applied according to label directions can adversely affect vulnerable populations.
2. **Human Health.** Research demonstrates that pesticide exposure elevates the risk of birth defects, Parkinson's disease, and cancer, among others.
3. **Bees, pollinators, and beneficial organisms.** Pesticides have consistently been implicated as a key issue in pollinator declines.
4. **Pets.** Pets often walk through chemically-treated lawns, and can easily absorb pesticides through their paws.
5. **Water quality.** Pesticides can runoff or leach into soils, contaminating groundwater, damaging aquatic life, and putting stress on municipal water treatment plants.
6. **EPA registration of pesticides does not equal safety.** EPA establishes allowable hazards based on risk assessments that are filled with uncertainty and incomplete information on product ingredients, chemical mixtures, and additive and synergistic effects.
7. **Effective alternatives are available.** Toxic pesticides are not necessary for beautiful lawns and landscapes. Most garden stores stock organic/natural products and even some commercial lawn care companies offer organic practices.



## Steps You Can Take:

1. **Find allies and create a coalition.** Start with your family, friends and neighbors. Contact local groups that may be interested, such as environmental organizations, community groups, garden clubs, churches, and the PTA.
2. **Contact your city council member** and let them know that you strongly support a pesticide law similar to Takoma Park's Safe Grow Zone ordinance, or Beyond Pesticides' model policy.
3. **Start a petition.** Starting your own petition is easy! You can start a petition online using one of many free petition-hosting sites, or contact Beyond Pesticides and we can help set one up for you through our action alert system. You can also simply print up a piece of paper and collect signatures manually when you attend local events, canvas door-to-door, etc. Be sure to get the first and last name, home address (it's important to be able to verify that a supporter is within the target area) and email or phone number for follow up.
4. **Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.** Be concise and summarize your position in the first sentence (most editors read the first 2-3 sentences before deciding whether to include a letter). Be sure to keep your letter under 200 words, and pay attention to spelling and grammar. Need talking points? Beyond Pesticides has a guide to help you generate a great letter: [bit.ly/PesticideLTR](http://bit.ly/PesticideLTR).
5. **Contact Beyond Pesticides.** Finally, tell us what you're doing to help stop or reduce pesticides in your community or ask us if you need assistance. We talk to people every day who, like you, want change in their communities. Call us at 202-543-5450, send us an email at [info@beyondpesticides.org](mailto:info@beyondpesticides.org), or post a note to our facebook page. Let us know if you're ready to embark on your own local campaign!

## Remember, We're Here to Help!

Arm yourself with the facts by using Beyond Pesticides' website on science, policy and action. See our resource, *Pesticide-Induced Diseases Database* ([bit.ly/pidd](http://bit.ly/pidd)) and information on safer alternatives to toxic pesticides ([bit.ly/SaferChoice](http://bit.ly/SaferChoice)) to help make your case. If you need additional help, we have staff that can work with you and provide assistance. We'd love to hear from you!



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