



## Toxic-Free OC Response to AVCA’s Email Blast Sent 5/6/24 Regarding Pesticide Use Concerns

#	Statements from AVCA’s Email Blast	Toxic-Free OC Refutation and/or Comments
1	<p>The email is titled “AVCA Proactively Addresses Pesticide Use Concerns” and states: “The Aliso Viejo Community Association (AVCA) Board wants to be sure the community is aware of the facts and proactive actions your association is taking on pesticide concerns.”</p>	<p>This email blast was sent to Delegates and Residents of Aliso Viejo <b>reactively</b>, in response to the recent news exposing the dangers of the chronic use of toxic chemicals that AVCA landscapers have used in the city for years. In addition, for <b>10 months</b> Toxic-Free OC (TFOC) members have been urging AVCA to cease use of these highly toxic synthetic chemicals while researching alternatives. <b>There is nothing “proactive”</b> about responding after almost 1 year of residents pleading with AVCA!</p> <p>Since 2018 through 2020, a different, unaffiliated group of Aliso Viejo (AV) residents brought this issue to AVCA’s and Aliso Viejo City Council’s attention. Unfortunately, the group was met with similar dismissive responses by AVCA (stating that going toxic-free landscaping is too costly and continuing to use these toxic chemicals throughout the city).</p>
2	<p>After a handful of homeowners first voiced their concerns about herbicide spraying last year, the AVCA Board and staff immediately began to meet with numerous landscape professionals, consultants, licensed pest control advisers, community managers, City officials, etc.</p>	<p>This is a <b>highly misleading</b> statement! AVCA <b>did not</b> immediately do anything and <b>did not</b> venture outside of speaking to other landscaping vendors or consultants <b>until 2024!</b></p> <p>TFOC members and AV residents have been attending every single AVCA Board meeting since July 2023 and speaking up to ask AVCA to stop using toxic chemicals at our parks and slopes.</p> <p>Let’s break down the timeline of events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>June-July 2023:</b> AVCA has received <b>dozens</b> (not “a handful”) of emails concerning its use of toxic herbicides with requests to cease its use. AVCA emailed and told us that the products (toxic synthetic herbicides) used are <b>safe</b> to humans and animals when used according to the label. Residents attended the AVCA board meeting to voice their concerns due to the high number of adversely affected residents and pets. AVCA told us that they would look into alternatives, but no efforts were communicated to residents. <b>Bottom line: AVCA continued to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.</b></li> <li>• <b>August 2023:</b> Over 40 speeches about toxic herbicides (pesticides) use have been given at the AVCA board meetings to request ceasing its use and to post signs at sprayed areas to notify people in the area. AVCA told us that they would look into alternatives, but no efforts were communicated to residents. AVCA’s Treasurer stated that 6 years ago, a group of residents came forward with similar requests to use safer organic landscaping alternatives, but that the cost would be too high at \$1.3 million (estimate was provided in 2018). TFOC gave speeches at Aliso Viejo City Council to plead for help. Nothing was ever done!</li> </ul>



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		<p><b>Bottom line: AVCA continued to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>September-October 2023:</b> More residents had toxins testing conducted showing high levels of the same toxic herbicides in their systems as a result of toxic exposure to AVCA's herbicides, primary through inhalation and skin contact via air drift and volatilization. Over 50 speeches were given at the AVCA board meetings at this point and Toxic-Free OC founders requested to meet in private with AVCA board members and Powerstone employees to work together to resolve the issue. <b>This meeting was never granted.</b> <b>Bottom line: AVCA continued to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.</b></li><li>• <b>November 2023:</b> TFOC held a public rally to unite families and community members over this serious public health issue plaguing Aliso Viejo. Over 80 AV residents (homeowners AND renters – renters matter too) attended the rally in support of TFOC's efforts to stop toxic pesticides use in the city.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ OC Supervisor Katrina Foley sent her AV district representative to attend and speak at the AVCA board meeting to extend help to AV residents regarding this issue.</li></ul><b>Bottom line: AVCA continued to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.</b></li><li>• <b>December 2023:</b> Additional residents had toxins testing conducted showing high levels of the same toxic herbicides in their systems as a result of toxic exposure to AVCA's herbicides, also primary through inhalation and skin contact. More speeches were given at the AVCA board meetings. Again, Toxic-Free OC members requested to meet in private with AVCA board members and Powerstone employees to work together to resolve the issue. <b>This meeting was never granted.</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ AVCA stated during this meeting that <b>they will not change landscapers and have only consulted with the same 2 landscaping vendors</b> that have been spraying toxic chemicals: Mission Landscape &amp; O'Connell Landscape. AVCA then reiterated their unwillingness to work with any other vendor by publishing this statement in their December 2023 Pesticide Report (referenced in their email blast). AVCA also stated that they could not make changes to contracts for 2024, however the landscaping contracts were not signed until February 2024 and did not commence until March 2024.</li></ul><b>Bottom line: AVCA continued to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.</b></li><li>• <b>January 2024:</b> TFOC founders met with OC Board Supervisor,</li></ul>



Katrina Foley to discuss this issue with AVCA and she agreed to reach out to AVCA and OC counterparts (OCFA, OC Department of Agriculture, OC Public Works, etc.) to communicate with AVCA. TFOC members (25-30) consistently attended AVCA board meetings to monitor or speak up on the continued pesticides use. **TFOC requested private meetings to work together on solutions. AVCA did not grant a meeting.** AVCA landscapers finally started to place signs at some locations. However, many locations were still sprayed without signs.

**Bottom line: AVCA continued to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.**

- **February 2024:** Mission Landscape, hired by AVCA, sprayed at the Wood Canyon Trail at Canyon View Park without authorization. The Wood Canyon Dr. location on the spray schedule was **misinterpreted** by Mission Landscape employees and therefore both the **Wood Canyon Dr. AND Wood Canyon Trail were sprayed.** **Hundreds** of residents attending this park and hiking up & down this trail over the holiday weekend were exposed to toxic Lifeline Herbicide (glyphosate-based herbicide [GBH] called glufosinate-ammonium). Several complaints about Mission's non-compliance and AVCA's lack of oversight of its vendors were reported to authorities.
  - Mission's representative issued an apology at the AVCA meeting. AV City investigated this mishap and stated that the Mission employee was just "reprimanded." If residents had not caught this mistake, it would have never been uncovered. Residents are still unaware of how AVCA and Mission intend to rectify this serious mistake and what actions will be taken to ensure it never happens again.

**Bottom line: AVCA continued to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.**

- **March 2024:** Since July 2023, TFOC members & residents (25-30) attended the AVCA board meetings to monitor or speak up on the continued pesticides use. **TFOC requested private meetings to work together on solutions. AVCA did not grant a meeting.** **Bottom line: AVCA continued to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.**
- **April 2024:** The OC Register published an investigative, detailed story revealing the public health crisis that AVCA has contributed to, and also revealing that AVCA's decisions thus far imply that public health or safety is NOT a priority (4/19/24). **OC Register also published our story on the front page of the Sunday newspaper (4/21/24)! KTLA aired our story on live television (4/19/24)!** You can download the front page article or watch the KTLA story on the TFOC home page: <https://toxicfreeoc.org/>



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		<p>This breaking news was also shared by: Yahoo, MSN, Reddit, Whittier Daily News, Ground News, RTM Law Firm News, local radio stations, local business groups, and more external entities in support of TFOC's cause.</p> <p>TFOC members, including a 5-year old child who was sickened by AVCA's herbicides, spoke at AV City Council. You can watch these speeches on the TFOC website: <a href="https://toxicfreeoc.org/testimonials">https://toxicfreeoc.org/testimonials</a></p> <p><b>Bottom line: AVCA continued to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes. To date, no notable actions have been taken by City Council to help.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>May 6, 2024:</b> AVCA is now responding to our pleas and outcries of almost a year, to protect public health and our environment, by sending the email blast dated 5/6/24.  <b>Bottom line: AVCA continues to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.</b></li> </ul> <p><i>**AVCA continues to diminish the significance of this issue by referring to TFOC and supporting residents to "a handful of emails."</i></p> <p><i>Please note that Toxic-Free OC has an ongoing petition with over 1,500 signatures requesting a moratorium on spraying toxic herbicides and pesticides in the city and supporting safer/organic landscaping in Aliso Viejo. If you have not signed, you are welcome to: <a href="https://www.change.org/p/stop-spraying-of-toxic-pesticides-and-herbicides-in-aliso-viejo">https://www.change.org/p/stop-spraying-of-toxic-pesticides-and-herbicides-in-aliso-viejo</a></i></p>
3	<p>The AVCA Board has a fiduciary duty to all AVCA members to maintain its landscaping at a reasonably high standard and makes decisions only after conducting a thorough investigation in a fiscally responsible manner. All AVCA decisions take the interests of the entire community into consideration and are made in accordance with its fiduciary duty.</p>	<p>The AVCA's CC&amp;Rs state in Article VI, Section 6.01 under "Duties of Community Association" that landscaping should be maintained in a "safe and attractive condition".</p> <p>AVCA's website states that their "mission is to protect, preserve and maintain the Association's twenty-one parks and slopes within the City of Aliso Viejo in an attractive and <b>safe</b> manner while striving to <b>improve the recreational experience</b> for AVCA dues paying members."</p> <p>Continuing to spray toxic chemicals at parks and residential slopes when residents have provided medical evidence of their illnesses or disabilities as a result of this toxic exposure, is a violation of their CC&amp;Rs and mission statement. Our parks and public areas are <b>not safe</b>. Even the slopes behind our homes make our outdoor living areas <b>unsafe. Residents are afraid to use AV parks</b>. This is <b>destroying</b> the recreational experience for AVCA dues paying members.</p> <p>AVCA has stated that they will act accordingly to "AVCA's best interests." However, AVCA has a fiduciary duty to carry out the best interests of its <b>members</b>. Based on countless testimonials over the past 10 months, these actions are <b>not</b> aligned with members' interests.</p>
4	<p>As an added measure, AVCA invited Orange County</p>	<p>Several Aliso Viejo residents submitted complaints of pesticide-related illness to the OC Agricultural Commissioner, OC Department of Agriculture, CA</p>



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	<p>Agricultural Commissioner Jose Arriaga and Deputy Agricultural Commissioner Damara Trumbauer to attend a recent community meeting to educate residents on pesticide products.</p>	<p>Department of Pesticides Regulation (DPR), and Cal EPA - <b>prior to their attendance at this meeting! As a result of these complaints, these authorities reached out to and became interested in speaking with AVCA!</b></p> <p>When OC Agricultural Commissioner, Jose Arriaga arrived at the AVCA meeting, he prefaced his presentation with a statement that his department was currently investigating multiple complaints in the area, which couldn't be discussed further because they were private matters. The Commissioner provided information on strict guidelines and policies that AVCA COULD IMPLEMENT with its landscapers, to restrict the use of specific toxic products. This is something AVCA could do today!</p> <p>A representative from CA DPR also attended the meeting and stayed until almost 10pm because she wanted to hear all of the speakers during Homeowner Forum. (Yes, AVCA meetings have been ending close to 10pm and Homeowner Forum continues to be scheduled at the end of the meeting.)</p>
5	<p>One major takeaway from their presentation was after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approves a product, California requires additional studies and extensive testing to confirm that the product meets California's stricter standards before it can be used.</p>	<p><b>The EPA's testing to determine label signal words does NOT include human data.</b> The EPA conducts limited animal testing and bases their Signal Words (describing levels of toxicity) on <b>ONE single, acute exposure to an animal.</b> EPA's testing guidelines are over 20 years old!</p> <p>The Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is provided by the pesticide manufacturer and provides OSHA Signal Words that account for chronic or prolonged exposure, similar to what Aliso Viejo residents and pets experience when our parks and slopes are sprayed over and over and over again. Numerous clinical studies on humans have been published demonstrating that these herbicides (pesticides) cause serious adverse effects to humans and animals.</p> <p>EPA testing guidelines are subpar. See for yourself:  <a href="https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/sites/default/files/iccvam/suppdocs/feddocs/epa/epa_870r_1000.pdf">https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/sites/default/files/iccvam/suppdocs/feddocs/epa/epa_870r_1000.pdf</a></p>
6	<p>AVCA's landscape companies have reduced the number of products used on AVCA property to a total of nine. These products serve different purposes based on need and are further detailed on the website.</p>	<p>The reduction of 17 chemicals to 9 just occurred in March 2024 as a result of TFOC's consistent communication and research on AVCA products, evidencing that the city's parks and slopes were over-sprayed with excessive toxic chemicals, exposing residents, pets, wildlife and the environment to a toxic chemical burden.</p> <p>Although the reduction in the number of chemicals used since March 2024 has been reduced to 9, these chosen chemicals approved for use by AVCA in Aliso Viejo are still highly toxic, synthetic chemicals.</p> <p>Carolyn McCuan, MS MB - TFOC Founder, Medical &amp; Regulatory Consulting Firm Owner, Clinical Researcher, Molecular Biologist and Protein Chemist, who was also sickened by AVCA's herbicides, conducted research on these 9 AVCA-approved chemicals and found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Most</b> of these 9 chemicals contain the <b>OSHA Signal Word: DANGER</b> (highest toxicity level that can be rated for a chemical);</li> <li>• Approved product <b>Bayer Specticle G</b> contains <b>CA Prop65</b></li> </ul>





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		<p><b>ingredients;<sup>1</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved product <b>Speed Zone herbicide contains 2,4-D which is 50% of the active ingredient in Agent Orange</b>; the <b>US EPA is currently being sued</b> for the haste reapproval of use of this chemical as an herbicide on our crops and damaging neighboring fields and vegetation (because <b>PESTICIDES DRIFT!</b>).<sup>2,3,4</sup></li> <li>• <b>Speed Zone</b> also contains <b>dicamba</b> which was recently <b>banned in Feb. 2024</b> by a federal judge for causing millions of acres of crop damage and <b>harming endangered species</b>;<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Approved product <b>Lifeline herbicide is a glyphosate-based herbicide (GBH)</b>, containing <b>glufosinate-ammonium</b> which is an analog of glyphosate and <b>chemically equivalent</b>, therefore <b>showing up in toxins tests as glyphosate</b>; <b>Glufosinate has been determined in clinical testing to be WORSE to human health than glyphosate!</b> It is <b>banned in 29 other countries</b>, including Europe, UK and Morocco for its known toxicity to damage fertility in humans and animals. It is also toxic to the environment, aquatic wildlife, birds, and pollinators. It also causes brain damage, respiratory, eye and organ damage, memory impairment, and more. This is the <b>same chemical that left me disabled in 2023!</b><sup>6-14</sup></li> <li>• Approved product <b>Atrimmec herbicide is highly flammable</b>; Aliso Viejo is already a very high fire-prone city making this an unwise choice for use, considering the landscapers spray the weeds dry and leave them on the slopes to serve as fuel for fire;</li> <li>• Approved product <b>Quali-Pro T/I 2.5G Herbicide (granules)</b> which in granular form is still <b>toxic via inhalation</b> like toxic sprays; the product Safety Data Sheet also states it is <b>HIGHLY toxic to fertility and lungs when inhaled</b>, is a Category 2 <b>carcinogen</b>, causes neuron toxicity that can result in <b>Parkinson's disease and mitochondrial damage and cancer</b>.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> [https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/www.agrian.com/pdfs/Specticle\\_G2e\\_MSDS.pdf](https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/www.agrian.com/pdfs/Specticle_G2e_MSDS.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> [https://labelsds.com/images/user\\_uploads/Speedzone%20Southern%20SDS%201-23-20.pdf](https://labelsds.com/images/user_uploads/Speedzone%20Southern%20SDS%201-23-20.pdf)  
<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agent\\_Orange](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agent_Orange)  
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/jun/19/epa-herbicides-agent-orange-lawsuit>  
<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/feb/07/us-weedkiller-ban-dicamba-epa>  
<sup>6</sup> <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/epdf/10.1021/acsestwater.3c00094>  
<sup>7</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0161813X08000703?via%3Dihub>  
<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cdms.net/ldat/mpFPT001.pdf>  
<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cdms.net/ldat/mpC1P002.pdf>  
<sup>10</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0960327108092291>  
<sup>11</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/eu-pesticides-database/start/screen/active-substances/details/79>  
<sup>12</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32008R1272>  
<sup>13</sup> <https://www.anses.fr/fr/content/l%E2%80%99anses-proc%C3%A8de-au-retrait-de-l%E2%80%99autorisation-de-mise-sur-le-march%C3%A9-du-basta-f1-un-produit>  
<sup>14</sup> [https://pan-india.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Glufosinate-Ammonium-An-overview\\_PAN-India\\_Dec2022.pdf](https://pan-india.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Glufosinate-Ammonium-An-overview_PAN-India_Dec2022.pdf)



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		<p>At this point, after AVCA's 8 months of research and having consulted with their pest control adviser who chose these dangerous products, AVCA has failed to conduct thorough research in providing solutions that will keep residents and pets safe.</p> <p>TFOC has already provided AVCA with solutions from several cities, none of which use these toxic synthetic ingredients. AVCA still has not agreed to meet with any TFOC members to come together to develop a solution for the community.</p> <p><b>Carolyn McCuan has partnered with researchers at UC Irvine to obtain data and further investigate how the use of these toxic synthetic chemicals are affecting our local environment.</b></p>
7	<p>All Orange County cities researched and contacted by AVCA use a combination of organic and synthetic products, but not one is solely organic. AVCA uses a combination of both.</p>	<p><b>This statement is incredibly misleading!</b> Other non-toxic OC cities cited by TFOC DO NOT spray synthetic products at the majority of their public parks or greenbelt areas. Some cities may still spray synthetic products on lower risk areas such as street cracks, which may pose a lesser risk when compared to the chronic exposure of sprayed parks or at residential slopes where people are at risk while being in their yards or having windows open.</p> <p>TFOC maintains city public records to confirm these statements. These public records provide product names, dates and locations of sprayed areas, and usage reports. <b>TFOC members have made multiple requests to AVCA for the pesticide usage reports, but AVCA refuses to provide them.</b></p> <p><b>Residents have a right to know how much of a toxic substance they were exposed to!</b> Aliso Viejo residents remain kept in the dark. Lack of transparency by AVCA demonstrates a negligent approach when it comes to public health and safety!</p> <p>AVCA did not introduce an organic product until <b>May 2024</b>, after almost one year of being pressured by TFOC, countless residents, and the media.</p> <p><b>Bottom line: AVCA continues to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.</b></p>
8	<p>AVCA vendors do not use glyphosate.</p>	<p>AVCA vendors proudly state that they do not use glyphosate, and that they use an alternative. However, <b>this alternative is a glyphosate-based herbicide</b> (GBH) called glufosinate (brand names: Cheetah Pro, Lifeline). Glyphosate and glufosinate are analogs – chemically equivalent – <b>so they are both detected as glyphosate in toxins tests.</b> Clinical research on humans show that <b>glufosinate is actually worse than glyphosate.</b> See #6 above.</p>
9	<p>Continual misinformation has been shared throughout the community (in some cases from external parties) that AVCA could go completely organic for a minor increase in YOUR assessments, that is inaccurate, they do not reflect how AVCA's assessments are calculated</p>	<p>TFOC is requesting AVCA to distinguish the specific "continual misinformation" that is being shared. <b>TFOC has shared the cost that AVCA has repeatedly provided to residents: \$1.3 million to go organic.</b></p> <p>This is the same amount that was provided to residents in 2018. If this information came from AVCA, then AVCA should not claim this to be "misinformation", unless AVCA had provided residents misinformation. AVCA also stated that the \$1.3 million covers the costs of labor (pulling weeds, trimming, etc.) and weeds waste disposal. This should be sufficient as this method would no longer require spraying toxic herbicides! This is great news.</p>



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	<p>and the actual costs of implementing an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach that is solely reliant on organic products for all 600+ acres that AVCA maintains.</p> <p>The only cost quoted publicly to date is \$1.3 million dollars, which is the annual cost for labor and waste disposal alone.</p>	<p>Regarding assessments, AVCA has not been transparent with how assessments are calculated and has not provided a detailed breakdown. Based on current assessments shared by numerous residents, this cost is affordable.</p> <p>AVCA has already increased our assessments by more than this in 2022-2023! Per the financial reports, <b>AVCA fees already increased by \$1.7 million from 2022 to 2023.</b></p> <p>(It is important to note that in 2018, a different, unaffiliated group of AV residents requested that AVCA cease use of toxic herbicides. AVCA also told this group that it would cost \$1.3 million to go organic. This is the same amount AVCA provided us in 2023 and 2024. This set cost is also published in AVCA's December 2023 pesticide report, cited in their email blast.)</p> <p>During this transition time, labor and waste disposal (\$1.3 million) is all we need to maintain our beautiful parks and landscaping, without inflicting toxic chemical risks on residents, pets, wildlife, and our environment.</p> <p>Why not take a tiered approach by developing pilot programs, as suggested by TFOC founders last year? This is what other cities have done. TFOC founders have already taken proactive next steps to help Aliso Viejo: Carolyn McCuan has already developed contacts and working relationships with organic landscape vendors and consulting groups that have helped other cities transition to organic; Tracy Blum's brother serves on the Mission Viejo Planning Commission and can provide insightful experience on their city's transition.</p> <p>AVCA stated and published in their December 2023 Pesticide Report that they will not change landscape vendors. This shows that AVCA is violating their fiduciary duty by not obtaining bids from new vendors, and using the same 2 vendors that have been clients for ~15-20 years.</p>
10	<p>This amount would be an additional annual cost added to the budget in perpetuity and does not include everything in an IPM approach, such as all cultural practices included in a pesticide free landscaping, i.e., water management, mulch, aerification, plants, application products, pest control, etc.</p>	<p>The IPM approach would be "nice to have" but is not a priority when testing a new program. <b>The priority should be protecting the public health and safety of our residents, protecting our wildlife including pollinators like bees and butterflies, and our environment</b> by stopping this toxic practice that is destroying lives and our land.</p> <p>We are <b>already spending ~\$7 million annually in landscaping</b> which includes water management, mulch, aerification, etc. There are programs in place where costs for these landscaping extras can be minimized. Opportunities for cost savings seem to not have been explored by AVCA which is one that is well worth looking into to help save on costs.</p>
11	<p>Your AVCA Board has a long history of maintaining the community efficiently and being fiscally responsible. The current landscape practices are resulting in</p>	<p>The "vibrant landscaping" can still be maintained without showering the parks and slopes with toxic chemicals that have left many residents and pets with debilitating diseases, illness, adverse symptoms, or worse.</p>





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	<p>vibrant landscaping throughout Aliso Viejo. In fact, several of your community User Groups have recently commented how the community parks look better then ever!</p>	<p>AVCA has a duty per the CC&amp;Rs to maintain the landscape in a "safe and attractive condition." See #3 above. Nothing about spraying toxic chemicals on parks and slopes month after month is safe!</p> <p><b>Bottom line: AVCA continues to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.</b></p>
12	<p>AVCA only uses caution label products with the lowest toxicity level available on the market, with one exception, Suppress which is an organic product that was recently added to our product list. This product has a warning label and is being used in a test area to evaluate its efficacy. Organic products typically result in more frequent community spraying.</p>	<p>AVCA is referring to the Caution label that is designated by the EPA. The EPA <b>does not have testing on human data</b>, nor does the EPA base this labeling on chronic or prolonged exposure. The labeling is based on a one-time, short acute exposure to testing animals. Glyphosate, having known to cause several cancers, Parkinson's disease, and more ailments, also carries the EPA Caution label. The EPA is currently being sued for haste approval of a toxic herbicide that is on AVCA's approved list of products.</p> <p>More appropriate safety information can be found on the product manufacturer's Safety Data Sheet (SDS). Per Section 2 of the SDS, OSHA provides a signal word based on chronic and prolonged exposure, which is more synonymous with the type of exposure Aliso Viejo residents experience since we live and play in the areas that are chronically sprayed.</p> <p>After pleading with AVCA for 10 months, TFOC is glad to see that <b>finally, an organic product was added in May 2024</b>. However, it is a very small area and unfortunately the parks are still being poisoned. It is disappointing that it took AVCA almost one year to finally react, even after residents provided extensive medical and clinical evidence of the harms the chemicals were causing in the community.</p> <p>Suppress has a warning label because it is acid-based; the short-term acute exposure that the spray tech or other persons in the vicinity of spraying (from herbicide drift) may experience. Regardless of the chemicals being organic or synthetic, the spray tech should ALWAYS be in PPE, and other people should NEVER be in the area when spraying is occurring! Lack of clinical studies from the EPA do not provide a recommended time on the label to stay away from the sprayed area. Irvine uses a general guideline of closing off the sprayed area for at least 72 hours to keep people and pets safe.</p> <p>Organic products are safer for the environment and wildlife, as it will biodegrade. Synthetic chemicals do not biodegrade easily, thereby remaining as pollutants in our soil, water and air. Disturbance of the environment (kicking up dirt, wind, running through sprayed plants, etc.) can re-toxify humans and animals.</p> <p>"Frequent spraying" seems to be a pressing issue with AVCA's landscapers as they spray parks every month, and last year up to 7 chemicals in one month per park. Residents have documentation of <b>12-24" weeds growing on slopes that were just sprayed one month prior</b>, leading us to <b>question the efficiency of the chosen toxic synthetic products and questioning the</b></p>



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		<p><b>poor quality of work that residents are paying millions to Mission &amp; O'Connell landscapers to do.</b> New vendors need to be explored.</p> <p><b>Bottom line: AVCA continues to allow spraying toxic synthetic herbicides, even at parks and residential slopes.</b></p>
13	<p>AVCA's Board recently installed community bulletin boards at each park and have directed staff and landscape companies to post all spray schedules on the website, at the AVCA office, sports fields, and parks prior to any product application.</p>	<p>This change is only now occurring because of TFOC and residents putting pressure on AVCA for several months! Although we are thankful for AVCA's efforts with bulletin boards serving as an additional measure, it is costly: <b>\$43,000!</b></p> <p>These bulletin boards do not notify or warn any households who can be highly exposed if they don't attend the parks, for example those whose backyards are adjacent to a park or slope being sprayed, or those who live in the vicinity of the sprayed areas.</p> <p><b>By state law per CA Civil Code Section 4777 3(A), AVCA must post spray signs in or around the common area where it can be conspicuously seen!</b> If this is not practical, then <b>AVCA must provide individual notices to owners!</b><sup>15</sup></p> <p>Not only are Aliso Viejo parks unsafe, but also going outside in our backyards or opening our windows can be unsafe. <b>Herbicide and pesticide exposure have been documented to cause human harm, childhood brain tumors, cancer, and more within 2.5 miles of the sprayed areas!</b><sup>16,17,18,19</sup></p>
	<p>The Board welcomes comments from any AVCA member who has an opinion on whether assessments should be increased to pay for further reductions in pesticide and herbicide use.</p>	<p>TFOC also encourages more communication!</p> <p>For 10 months, TFOC members and unaffiliated residents have attended every AVCA board meeting to voice their concerns, provide clinical evidence of harm to humans, animals, and the environment, and even ourselves! We have brought forth medical evidence of Aliso Viejo residents with high levels of these toxic herbicides in their systems, some as young as <b>3 years old!</b> This is unacceptable!!! <b>Our parks and homes should be SAFE places for our residents and pets.</b></p> <p>TFOC has brought forth solutions that have been heavily researched by our members which include doctors, scientists, professors, city employees, organic landscape consultants, arborists, legislators, and attorneys. With our extensive research shared with AVCA, <b>TFOC has made several requests to</b></p>

<sup>15</sup> CA Civil Code Section 4777: (3) (A) At least 48 hours prior to application of the pesticide to a common area, the association or its authorized agent shall, if practicable, post the written notice described in paragraph (1) in a conspicuous place in or around the common area in which the pesticide is to be applied. Otherwise, if not practicable, the association or its authorized agent shall provide individual notice to the owner and, if applicable, the tenant of the separate interest that is adjacent to the common area.

<sup>16</sup> <https://beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/2021/04/living-within-2-5-miles-of-chemical-farming-increases-risk-of-childhood-brain-tumors/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0013935121003728#tbl1>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3414435/pdf/nihms301630.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.beyondpesticides.org/assets/media/documents/infoservices/pesticidesandyou/Summer%2004/Getting%20the%20Drift%20on%20Chemical%20Trespass.pdf>



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		<b>meet with AVCA Board members and Powerstone employees</b> to work together to develop a feasible solution for our communities. <b>However, AVCA has not granted us a single meeting, nor has AVCA placed this topic on the agenda, after 100+ speaker cards on this topic of herbicides and pesticides have been submitted to AVCA.</b>

\*\*Residents, please speak with your AVCA Delegates or HOA Board Presidents within your communities. AVCA Board member elections are on June 17<sup>th</sup> and we encourage all Delegates (or HOA Board Presidents) to vote! Participation has historically been low and we hope that you all are gaining interest in helping to change AVCA for the betterment of our communities and quality of life in Aliso Viejo!

*“You can have all the riches and success in the world, but if you don’t have your health, you have nothing.” – Steven Adler*