

## Critics rip poison plan

By [DON PEAT](#), SUN MEDIA

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What's up top doc?

That's what a group of pro-environment doctors is asking the city's medical officer of health after crews were given the green light to spray chemicals on garbage and drop rat poison to control pests around Toronto's growing trash piles during the civic workers' strike.

Gideon Forman, executive director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, says while he has huge respect for Dr. David McKeown, he disagrees with the use of pesticides he's presiding over.

"In general, Toronto Public Health is fantastic ... but I think the city is jumping the gun a little bit here with rat poisons and insecticide," Forman told the Sun.

McKeown has okayed the city hiring a pest control company to spray pesticides on the temporary garbage sites and the use of rat poison around the sites.

"While I appreciate there are concerns about the use of pesticides, I am satisfied that the city is taking the necessary precautions to ensure pesticides are applied in a way that minimizes any risk to public health," McKeown stated earlier this week. "It is essential that adequate pest control measures are maintained at these sites to prevent infestations of insects or rodents which may present a potential health hazard."

On Friday he issued an order under the province's Health Protection and Promotion Act demanding the city spray the Christie Pits dump site to control an insect infestation.

Forman said one of the chemicals being used is highly toxic to fish and bees.

"If it gets into storm sewers and makes its way into Lake Ontario, it could be quite harmful to aquatic wildlife," he said. "While mosquitos are potentially a health risk there are other ways to deal with them."

The group also called on the city to use mechanical rat traps instead of poison.

"Rats are a problem, we're not denying that they are a problem, but let's go at it with a mechanical trap that's not going to introduce poisons into the environment," Forman said.

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