



City of Holyoke,  
Massachusetts  
*Birthplace of Volleyball*

Irma Cruz <cruzi@holyoke.org>

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## Fwd: Emergency meeting this week or early next week - city council request

1 message

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Brenna McGee <mcgeeb@holyoke.org>  
To: Irma Cruz <cruzi@holyoke.org>

Fri, May 21, 2021 at 12:06 PM

Next agenda

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### Brenna Murphy McGee, MMC

City Clerk/Registrar of Voters/Records Access Officer

Vice President of the Massachusetts City Clerk's Association

*City of Holyoke, Massachusetts*

536 Dwight Street, Room #2

Holyoke, MA 01040

(T) 413-322-5520

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*Thank you for your email. Due to a declared public health emergency, City Hall is closed until further notice.*

*During this time, many of our department staff members will not be in office but will be available remotely via email and/or phone for assistance. Essential services will still be provided, including trash & recycling pick up.*

*Please visit [www.holyoke.org](http://www.holyoke.org) for a listing of city departments, contact information and ongoing updates regarding the City's Coronavirus response. Email communications and voicemails are welcome and a staff member will return your message as soon as possible.*

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Kirstin Beatty** <K@lasttreelaws.com>

Date: Thu, May 20, 2021 at 1:50 PM

Subject: Re: Emergency meeting this week or early next week - city council request

To: <mcgeeb@holyoke.org>

To the Holyoke City Council, Board of Health, and Mayor Murphy:

I spoke recently with Mayor Murphy and, after looking into the issue, realize that there is a mistaken assumption Holyoke would have substantial costs if choosing to opt out of the state program.

In fact, the law requires a town only to provide for education and public engagement, not spraying, if opting out as also stated on NOFA Massquito's website. Opting out could be quite cheap, especially as the state has educational materials. The only change is the state will not spray.

I've summarized all the facts below and think it best if we put forward something simple to opt out of the state program. Please suggest the same to Mayor Murphy if you have an opportunity.

Sincerely,

Kirstin Beatty

Summary of the State Pesticide Spraying Issue and Resolution:

#### 1. PESTICIDES PROMOTE MOSQUITOES

Recent research, such as profiled in the National Geographic [<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/how-pesticides-actually-increase-mosquito-numbers>], explains that mosquitoes are not held in check by pesticides due to rapid development of resistance. Instead, populations of mosquitoes explode because mosquito predators, such as dragonflies, remain sensitive and suffer from pesticide applications.

#### 2. THE STATE SPRAYS A HARMFUL PESTICIDE

The state has a dated mosquito control program which includes aerial spraying of Anvil 10+10 with active ingredient Sumethrin. Like other adulticides, Sumethrin is extremely toxic, with lab tests confirming neurotoxicity, cancer promotion, kidney and liver damage. Thousands of pets with Sumethrin flea collars have experienced seizures. In addition, Anvil 10+10 contains PFAS "forever" chemicals from the container and Sumethrin has a mode of action similar to DDT. [Reference: <https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ncap/pages/26/attachments/original/1428423460/sumithrin.pdf?1428423460> ]

#### 3. HOLYOKE CAN OPT OUT - INDIVIDUALS CANNOT FULLY OPT OUT

Individual property owners may opt out of spraying, but the state may override this opt out in emergency. The municipalities can fully opt out.

Given that many in Holyoke already suffer headaches and other symptoms or illnesses that would be exacerbated by Sumethrin, Holyoke should opt out of state spraying.

If so, Holyoke must opt out by 28 May, submitting a plan to the state on that date.

#### 4. HOLYOKE CAN OPT OUT CHEAPLY BY FOCUSING ON EDUCATION & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The state allows municipalities to opt out provided an alternative plan is provided to the state. The state only requires that the plan include education and public engagement. Because the state already has educational materials online and because the community could also assist, the Holyoke could opt out with minimal cost and time.

#### 5. HOLYOKE CAN USE THE NOFA MOSQUITO CONTROL TEMPLATE WITH OR WITHOUT THE LARVICIDE USE & WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST EXPERTISE.

Holyoke must submit a plan by 28 May. This plan could be modeled on the templates provided by NOFA Massquito online, and omit the option for larvacide and a wildlife biologist's expertise. [Reference: <https://www.nofamass.org/massquito/> ]

If the larvacidal section is included, the suggested natural biological

control larvacide, *Bacillus thuringiensis*, does not kill dragonflies, and is very cheap (for example, Aquabac application is 2.5 - 10 lbs. per acre and \$187 for 40 lbs. at this link:

<https://www.arbico-organics.com/product/aquabac-bti-mosquito-control-granular-bacillus-thuringiensis-israelensis-bti/free-shipping>

]. However, killing mosquitoes may have an unintended effect on dragonflies by removing a food source.

In the NOFA larvacide template, a wildlife biologist's expertise is recommended to determine whether habitat is suitable for mosquito predators and whether predators exist. However, an alternative would simply be to focus on education and building or supporting habitat suitable for mosquito predators.

## 6. INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY COULD UPLIFT HOLYOKE

Building or supporting habitat suitable could be done by working with the gardening community, nonprofits, and businesses and could help to create a positive image for Holyoke.

The plan can include welcoming the participation of the community and businesses on the created advisory committee, and publicity in return on the town website. Options include:

1. The road median beautification flower plantings could refocus on native plantings and rain gardens to support biodiverse habitat.
2. An expert from the Audubon Society could also be invited to provide community training on bats and dragonflies - including on counting and on creating habitat.
3. A citizen count of dragonflies (in an area near water).
4. Local gardening centers could also be invited, or gardeners to discuss plants that mosquitoes dislike near homes, building or buying bat houses, or plants which support a biodiverse native habitat.

On 2021-05-17 17:36, Kirstin Beatty wrote:

> To the Holyoke City Council(BCCed) and Board of Health (BCCed):

>

>

> Please see the attached signatures and request for an emergency public meeting to allow Holyoke to submit an opt-out plan to the state by the > 28 May deadline, based on the sample templates shared by NOFA, in part > as the state's pesticide is quite toxic.

>

>

> Please note the very important National Geographic article, which > discusses how mosquitoes explode in population after pesticide > spraying since the mosquito predators are decimated and fail to > recover, unlike mosquitoes.

>

>

> I understand this is last-minute, having just learned of this issue. > Signatures are still being gathered through a google form at > <https://forms.gle/hh5vzw4yYZj1NTf9> and will be shared during any > emergency meeting.

>

>

> Please update me on the possibility of an emergency meeting so that I > can share this with others. I do not know the process.

>

>

- > The letter is also pasted below in case of any trouble opening.
- >
- >
- >
- > Sincerely,
- >
- > Kirstin Beatty
- > Last Tree Laws Director, Co-Chair
- > (413) 536-3505
- >
- >
- > TIME-SENSITIVE LETTER FOR HOLYOKE PUBLIC EMERGENCY MEETING
- >
- >
- > 2021 May 21
- >
- >
- > Dear Holyoke City Council, Board of Health, and Mayor Murphy,
- >
- > In August 2020, Massachusetts passed Governor Baker's emergency
- > legislation S.2757, aimed at reducing the spread of mosquito-borne
- > disease and revamping the state's approach to mosquito management. The
- > bill allows widespread use of toxic pesticides.
- >
- > We recommend the Board of Health and City Council hold a joint
- > emergency
- > meeting with public comment to discuss opting out of aerial/truck
- > mosquito spraying by the state and adopting a proactive alternative
- > mosquito control plan modeled on templates at the Northeast Organic
- > Farming Association's website at MassQuito Coalition (NOFA MA).
- >
- > The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has extended
- > the deadline for opting out to May 28. If the state decides to spray
- > for
- > mosquitoes at any time, communities who have not opted out by that date
- > will have lost control of decision making.
- >
- > To opt out of spraying the city must submit an alternative mosquito
- > control plan to the state for approval. Plans can include effective
- > measures such as biological controls, larvacide, reducing mosquito
- > breeding habitat, and engaging in public education to encourage people
- > to use insect repellents, wear appropriate clothing, and avoid outdoor
- > activity during peak mosquito hours if there is a heightened risk of
- > mosquito-borne disease.
- >
- > Here are some of the reasons we believe that spraying is the wrong
- > thing
- > to do:
- >
- > All insects -- including honeybees, native bees, and other pollinators
- > -- as well as natural predators of mosquito larvae, are harmed or
- > killed
- > by aerial or roadside pesticide spraying. Humans have been poisoning
- > insects en masse for decades resulting in a precipitous decline in
- > insect life, now commonly referred to as an "insect apocalypse." If we
- > want to have birds, bats, butterflies, mosquito predators and other
- > wildlife, not to mention food to eat in the future, we must stop the
- > indiscriminate use of pesticides now.
- >
- > The state's current pesticide of choice, Anvil 10+10, is highly toxic
- > and not acceptable, especially given the availability of minimum risk

- > organic-certified alternatives. Recently published reports in the
- > Boston Globe
- > indicate this product also contains undisclosed PFAS 'forever
- > chemicals'
- > associated with a range of diseases. The unknowns associated with
- > toxic,
- > EPA-registered pesticides underline the need for alternatives,
- > especially given the recent enormous deception by Monsanto regarding
- > the
- > cancer risks of its glyphosate-based pesticide and the recent federal
- > warning of PFAS water contamination across the USA.
- >
- > The most vulnerable among us, including children and people with
- > pre-existing health conditions or adults with autoimmune conditions are
- > at heightened risk of adverse health effects from aerial and truck
- > spraying of toxins.
- >
- > Wind drift makes it difficult to control where pesticides land --
- > ground
- > spraying can drift up to 300 feet even with no wind and aerial spraying
- > can drift up to eight miles! Clearly, spraying has the potential for
- > unintended contamination of open water, gardens, and organic farms.
- >
- > Holyoke is in actually in the lowest geographical risk category for
- > both
- > Eastern Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus according to a CDC 2020
- > risk map.
- >
- > We are never going to get rid of all mosquitoes, nor do we want to as
- > they are valuable food for other insects, birds, dragonflies, and
- > bats. Therefore,
- > we urge Holyoke to avoid the possible need for mosquito-spraying late
- > in the summer by creating and instituting a plan for safe, effective
- > and
- > ecologically-sound mosquito control measures.
- >
- >
- > More information:
- >
- > National Geographic article 31 May 2019: "How pesticides can actually
- > increase mosquito numbers" by Jake Buehler
- > <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/how-pesticides-actually-increase-mosquito-numbers#:~:text=The%20blood%20suckers%20evolve%20resistance,new%20study%20in%20Costa%20Rica.&text=Insecticides%20in%20at%20least%20one,by%20killing%20off%20their%20predators.>
- >
- > Fact sheet on active ingredient of state pesticide:
- > [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ncap/pages/26/attachments/original/1428423460/sumithrin.pdf?1428423460&fbclid=IwAR3mK8Pqwg342PfUSmUhX\\_H5Im6Lw779fO4wMc6qsl5FauEJ1bLamva55aw](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ncap/pages/26/attachments/original/1428423460/sumithrin.pdf?1428423460&fbclid=IwAR3mK8Pqwg342PfUSmUhX_H5Im6Lw779fO4wMc6qsl5FauEJ1bLamva55aw)
- >
- > Please support this proposed legislation in the 2021-2022 legislative
- > session:
- > S.556/H.937 AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PUBLIC HEALTH BY
- > ESTABLISHING AN ECOLOGICALLY BASED MOSQUITO MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN THE
- > COMMONWEALTH. These bills replace the Commonwealth's outdated and
- > expensive mosquito management system with one that is more ecologically
- > responsible as well as effective, affordable, and scientifically based.
- > For more information about the harmful nature of pesticides please see
- > <https://www.beyondpesticides.org/resources/mosquitos-and-insect-borne-diseases/resources>
- >
- > Model Plans from NOFA MassQuito:
- >
- > <https://www.nofamass.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Model-Ecological-Mosquito-Management-Policy-for->

Communities\_LarvicideOnlyFINALDraft.pdf

>

> [https://www.nofamass.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Model-Ecological-Mosquito-Management-Policy-for-Communities\\_AdulticideFINALDraft.pdf](https://www.nofamass.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Model-Ecological-Mosquito-Management-Policy-for-Communities_AdulticideFINALDraft.pdf)

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> Sincerely,

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> Ken Kipen, Chair, PATH (People Against Toxic Herbicides) Ashfield

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> Ellen Moyer, PhD, PE (Montgomery, MA)

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> Holyoke Residents:

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> Kirstin Beatty, Director, Co-chair, Last Tree Laws, 149 Central Pk

> Drive

>

> Kathy Fahy, Retired Nurse, 38 Howard St

>

> Liz LaBrocca, BS Sustainable Food and Farming UMass Amherst, 250

> Madison Avenue W

>

> Laura Clampitt, 182 Locust Street

>

> John Rivera, 2 Laurel Street Apt. 3

>

> Aviva Galaski, 1145 Northampton Street

>

> Juan Sanchez, 401 Main Street

>

> Glenn Sullivan, 1015 Hampden Street

>

> Alyssa Bellefeuille, 1203 Northampton Street

>

> E Aubrey, 68 Nonotuck Street

>

> Heather Ludden, 144 W Meadowview Road

>

> Angel Ludden, 144 West Meadowview Road

>

> Dan Owens, 187 Central Pk Drive

>

> Tanya Cushman, 152 Homestead Avenue

>

> Jessica Ruder Toomey, 27 Temple Street

>

> Charles Beatty, 149 Central Park Drive

>

> Aurelie Beatty Bruno, 149 Central Park Drive

>

> Guy O'Donnel, 367 Apremont Highway

>

> Chelsea Gazillo, 79 Lawler Street