

October 2007

To: Board of Pesticides Control Members and Staff

From: Wes Smith

RE: Combining the Pesticides Registrar and Water Quality Specialist positions

In 1981 the pesticide registration program and I were transferred from the Division of Inspections to the Board of Pesticides Control. A full time secretary position was added to support the program. At that time, before the computer age, the registration activities and some related duties occupied most of my time. We reviewed and processed many more Special Local Needs (24c) registrations, Section 18 Emergency Exemptions, and Limited Use Permits than we do today. It was all done without computers. I also worked on major projects such as spruce budworm spraying, container recycling and water quality monitoring. Also in the early 80's I started working with people who had nuisance bat problems.

Over the years there have been many changes in the registration program. At one point, because of budget cuts, the supporting secretary position was eliminated. The registration process became basically a one person operation, with me doing everything from depositing the fees to issuing the certificates of registration. That changed two years ago, when the person who makes the decisions was not allowed to handle the money. Now the checks are processed and deposited by the Office Manager. Over the years the number of 24c registrations, Section 18 Emergency Exemptions and Limited Use Permits have steadily decreased. Nuisance bat complaints have also declined over the years. Computerization has streamlined most of the registration activities.

At this time the majority of the registration activity takes place from mid October through mid April. Although there is registration activity year round and bat calls peak in late July and August, I have time to assist on other projects. The last several years I have helped on spray drift monitoring (Brown Tail Moth and Blueberry) and water quality sampling. This year, with the Water Quality Specialist position vacant, I have been even more involved with these projects.

My work with bats started back in the 80's when we had a chemical registered that the pest control operators could use to kill bats roosting in homes. Before they could use the chemical they needed a permit from the Board. I would contact the homeowner to be sure that all other non-lethal methods of control had been tried. Use of the chemical was a last resort. In 1990 the registrant eliminated the bat control use from the product label. At that time most PCO's did not want to get involved with bat proofing homes. I was directed to continue helping people with nuisance bat problems so that they would have a knowledgeable person to assist them. My work with bats peaked in the late 90's when I was responding to over 250 calls and doing approximately 75 on site inspections annually. Over the years a number of people, including many PCO's, have gotten into the bat proofing business. Also the public is becoming more aware of the beneficial

aspects of bats as one of nature's insecticides. As a result the number of calls I receive each year has steadily decreased. This year I have had fewer than 50 contacts and done only 13 on site inspections. I expect this trend to continue. I am informing the various agencies that refer calls to me that 2008 will be the last season I will be here. Before leaving in May of 2009 I will develop a document that can be posted on our web site or sent out, giving people the information they need to deal with nuisance bat problems.

The majority of the water quality work takes place during the time of year when registration activity is low. Heather Jackson, the last Water Quality Specialist, suggested that the two positions be combined. I would agree with that assessment, with several stipulations. First and foremost, the person must have exceptional computer skills. It is the computer that would allow one person to do both jobs, especially with some secretarial support. Also, during the spray season, the person would need the help of the field staff on various monitoring projects.

My recommendation would be to look for a person with an Agricultural or Biological background and very strong computer skills. Let the applicants know that the monitoring and sampling would involve a certain amount of strenuous physical activity. I would recommend secretarial support to help with data entry, issuing certificates of registration and other routine duties. Starting at this point the position could be groomed into what would best serve the needs of the Board.