



Pesticide newsletter

Nº3 - May 2021

Jurisdictional news



Chile: Victory of the residents of Chaitén against the use of glyphosate for road maintenance

Thirty-three residents of the municipality of Chaitén, in the province of Palena in Chile, filed a [lawsuit](#) on March 25th, 2021 to the Court of Appeals of Puerto Montt. They noticed the use of glyphosate herbicides in the maintenance of municipal roads by the company *Constructora San Felipe S.A.*

The complainants denounce the use of a glyphosate-based herbicide, which is a systemic, non-selective herbicide of broad spectrum. It destroys all types of plants, affecting both undesirable weeds and species necessary for the preservation of the ecosystem. According to the Directorate of Public Works (*Dirección de Obras Públicas*), the vegetation present along the roadside can be beneficial both aesthetically and for the maintenance of transport routes. In addition, this product has a negative impact on both the soil and insect populations. It also alters the composition of terrestrial and aquatic environments, posing a significant risk of environmental degradation.

The petitioners claim that their right to live in a healthy environment is being violated. The chemical pollution of this natural area, on the edge of the Pumalin Douglas Tompkins National Park (an area known for its rich biodiversity as well as for its strong tourist attraction) provokes the incomprehension of the inhabitants of the surroundings. The defenders of the environment also denounce the contradiction in spraying this herbicide within this area.

Finally, the residents of the municipality of Chaitén highlight the decision of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) in 2015 to classify this herbicide as a probable human carcinogen. The use of this substance is therefore problematic for both humans and the environment.

They therefore request the Court of Puerto Montt to order the immediate adoption of all necessary measures to restore the rule of law and ensure the adequate protection of those affected. They require the definitive cessation of the use of herbicides in the area and the use of alternative methods without highly toxic chemicals for cleaning and carrying out work in the area.

On April 11, 2021, the Court [rules](#) in favor of the petitioners, requesting that the corresponding minutes of proceedings be communicated to *Constructora San Felipe* and the Regional Road Authority.

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