

DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

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For Release: Thursday, February 6, 2014

## Costco Ordered to Pay Fine for Sale of Illegal Pesticides

### Pesticide removed from store shelves to safeguard Long Island's drinking water

The Costco Wholesale Corporation agreed to a civil penalty of \$60,000 after a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) investigation revealed the company sold pesticides that are banned on Long Island, DEC Commissioner Joe Martens announced today. DEC also ordered the company to remove the pesticides from all its stores throughout the region and to issue a recall notice to its members.

"Long Island's sole source aquifer is especially vulnerable to contamination, and DEC takes its responsibility to enforce environmental laws very seriously," DEC Commissioner Martens said. "DEC followed up on a tip and found Costco violated a ban on certain pesticides. DEC is vigilant in pursuing offenders that ignore these vital safeguards for Long Island's drinking water."

In March 2013, DEC received a tip from a concerned resident that the Holbrook Costco Wholesale store sold Bayer Advanced Lawn Complete Insect Killer (EPA Reg. No.: 72155-31), despite a label on the product stating, "Not for sale, sale into, distribution and or use in Nassau, Suffolk, Kings and Queens counties of New York." The individual spoke to the manager at Costco Wholesale Corporation, whom promptly removed the pesticides from the sales floor. Additionally, the shopper emailed a summary of the complaint, including photographs to the attention of DEC.

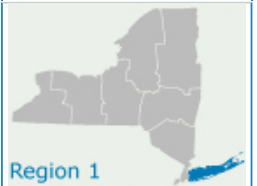
In response, DEC conducted inspections of several Long Island Costco Wholesale locations to ensure the product was pulled from the shelves. The inspections confirmed the product's removal and DEC concluded the corporation offered for sale 1,088 containers of the insecticide between February 16 and March 20, 2013. Pesticides such as Bayer Advanced Lawn Complete Insect Killer are banned on

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Region 1 Office of  
Communication  
Services  
50 Circle Road  
Stony Brook, NY  
11790  
631-444-0350  
[email us](#)

#### This Page Covers



Region 1  
Long Island

Serving the following  
Counties:

Nassau  
Suffolk

Long Island, including Kings and Queens counties, to protect the underground aquifer that supplies the region's drinking water. Records indicated New York City locations did not carry the product. Following DEC's investigation, Costco Wholesale Corporation issued a recall notice to all Costco members who purchased the product.

Documents obtained by DEC revealed that while the products were on the shelves, Costco sold 296 containers of the unregistered pesticides. DEC ordered Costco to upgrade its pesticide check system to prevent the sale of unregistered pesticides again.

DEC's investigation found the Costco Wholesale Corporation violated the Environmental Conservation Law requirement to register any pesticide that is used, distributed, sold or offered for sale within this state. The company signed a Consent Order and paid a fine of \$60,000.

Although the pesticides sold are considered safe for handling when label instructions are properly followed, these products, along with nearly 400 other pesticides registered in New York, are banned from use on Long Island to help protect the groundwater aquifer that supplies the region's drinking water.

When purchasing any pesticide, read the label carefully to ensure the chemical is appropriate for your region and applied properly. A list of [currently registered pesticides](#) in New York state can be found on DEC's website.

Anyone concerned about the sale, use or distribution of pesticides should call DEC's Bureau of Pesticides at (631) 444-0340. For general pesticide questions, contact the National Pesticide Information Center at 1-800-858-7378.

Anyone who observes an environmental crime in progress can anonymously contact DEC's Environmental Conservation Police at (631) 444-0250 or 1-800-TIPP DEC (1-800-847-7998).