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## **DOT backs off toxic spraying near Otsego Lake**

*By Joe Mahoney The Daily Star*  
**The Daily Star**

---- — After pressure by public officials to stop spraying a toxic herbicide along state Route 80 alongside Otsego Lake, the state Department of Transportation has tentatively agreed to instead use an organic substance, officials told The Daily Star on Monday.

“I’m happy to confirm we are moving forward with an alternative,” said Cooperstown Mayor Jeff Katz.

The mayor is one of a chorus of voices asking the state agency to indefinitely suspend the spraying of a product called Accord XRT II, a weed killer that contains the controversial active ingredient glyphosate.

The Otsego Lake Watershed Advisory Committee has also called on DOT to abandon the use of toxic herbicides in proximity to the lake, noting it serves as the source of drinking water for residents of Cooperstown and lakeside homeowners in the towns of Middlefield, Springfield and Otsego.

Officials said the state’s plan is still being finalized. Citing that fact, a DOT spokesman declined to comment on the new approach to weed control along the state highway running along the west shore of the lake.

Along the east side of the lake, county highway workers rely on mowing to keep down weeds and brush on the side of county Highway 28, another fact that the herbicide critics have been making in their discussions with state officials.

Katz said he has not been advised of the specific product that DOT expects to be using this summer.

“I think what we are going to agree to is going to make everyone happy,” he said.

The move comes on the hands of the village's successful push last year to eliminate the use of toxic herbicides and pesticides on village-owned Doubleday Field, widely regarded as a shrine to the national pastime.

For that trail-blazing project, village officials and the head groundskeeper for Doubleday Field, Quentin Hasak, were given guidance by Jennifer Grant, co-director of the New York State Integrated Pest Management Program at Cornell University.

In defending the earlier applications of Accord along state Route 80, DOT officials had said the product is approved by the state Department of Environmental Conservation and is used to control vegetation near the New York City watershed reservoirs. State officials also said the product is effective in eradicating knotweed and poison ivy.

DOT has described Accord XRT II as a safe product to use near water supplies, noting it is approved by the state Department of Environmental Conservation and is used to control vegetation near the New York City watershed reservoirs. DOT officials have described the product as effective in eradicating knotweed and poison ivy.

Two years ago, Katz was advised in a letter from a regional DOT official, Jack Williams, that the use of Accord XRT II along the Route 80 corridor presented an "acceptable risk, based on the application method and best practices."