

Angela Rossmann 1400 Promontory Road Boise, Idaho 83702

March 27, 2017

Celia Gould, Director  
Idaho State Department of Agriculture  
2270 Old Penitentiary Road  
Boise, Idaho 83701-0790

Dear Director Gould,

The recent response in our local community, to the news about the poisonous yews has been tremendously successful. Last week, a major corporation chose to remove several hundred yew plants from the sales floor at the Boise store location. Removing the plants for sale was done in goodwill as a courtesy, following a simple request. Today, two more key companies in the Treasure Valley have provided reassurance that poisonous yews have voluntarily been removed from sales product inventory. These big companies are willingly notifying the grower of the product discontinuation. Smaller established businesses within our community are taking steps of their own. Several stores have turned this crisis into a promotional opportunity. Instead of continuing to sell poisonous yews this spring, these stores have adopted a policy for credit and or exchange on the return of any yews. The return sales policy invites any customer returning a yew from anywhere, a 20% discount on a replacement purchase of a non-toxic plant at the store. This kind of sales policy may help offset the results of damaging publicity that businesses and contractors have received of late from selling deadly plants to the unsuspecting public. At this time, it seems an advisable option for business owners to offer discounts or sale exchanges as a step towards reestablishing trust within the community.

If the value of goodwill doesn't inspire businesses enough to implement the return sales policy and stop selling poisonous yews, the private sectors demand for healthier choices will in effect diminish future sales. The wide-reach of social media has raised public awareness about poisonous yews to a new high. That awareness has stirred many individuals to take personal responsibility. Residents living in Idaho's urban and wild interface shaken by the ghastly and needless deaths of wildlife from ingesting poisonous yews now feel alarmed for their children's safety as well as family pets. This emotional unease has led to a countless number of yews being yanked from yards and neighborhoods. Local businesses offering the return sales policy confirm the public trend is to find non-toxic plant replacements.

By all indications, it is likely that the market will eventually correct itself across the state of Idaho. But why wait for a market correction? Especially when businesses can choose to act responsibly with a self-regulating policy and cause the public no further harm. Many businesses in Ada and Blaine County have already adopted the policy to stop selling poisonous yews.

Is it possible for us to create a time table for commitments from all business segments throughout the state to adopt the return sales policy? Successful implementation of this commitment to the policy would be an effective way to ban poisonous yews sales and assure the community that corrective actions are being taken.

Sincerely,  
Angela K. Rossmann

cc:

Lt. Governor Brad Little  
Senator Jim Rice  
Senator Lee Heider  
Senator Mitchelle Stennett