

The Watershed Partnership, Inc.

February 12, 2007

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Education Committee
Capital Ave
Hartford, CT 06016

Re: H-7094 An Act Concerning Pesticide Applications At Schools And The Use Of Environmentally Sensitive Cleaning And Maintenance Products In Schools

Members of the Education Committee:

I am a physician, board certified in pathology and laboratory medicine, and Director of a nonprofit organization called The Watershed Partnership, Inc. Pathology is the study of the causes and effects of human disease and laboratory medicine includes the discipline of toxicology. The Watershed Partnership, Inc. works for and safe, healthy, livable communities in Connecticut and healthy watershed environments.

I am here today to ask you to further protect our children and grandchildren from the involuntary exposure to toxic chemicals at school.

Background:

In 2005, The Environment Committee recommended and the Connecticut legislature passed Public Act 05-252 that banned the use of toxic lawn pesticides at children's day-care centers and elementary schools.

The legislature recognized the risks that toxic lawn pesticides pose to health and the environment. These risks are well documented in scientific peer reviewed literature. Though we are all at risk from these toxic chemicals, **children are particularly vulnerable to the risks of cancer, immune disorders, and neurodevelopmental disorders.** Often symptoms do not appear until years after exposure. There is much evidence that raises serious doubts about the safety of these chemicals even when they are used as directed (see attached fact sheet).

Strengthen The Lawn Pesticide Ban

Each year, evidence mounts about the toxic effects of lawn pesticides **The safety of these chemicals is simply not adequate to justify their unnecessary use. Action is needed now to prevent further harm to our children.**

(over)

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Facts About Lawn Pesticide Safety.

Much is made about about the safety testing that toxic lawn pesticides are subjected to. Here are some facts you may not be aware of.

- The companies that produce the chemicals do the safety testing.
- Lawn pesticides are not tested for long term toxicity unless they are also used on food crops.
- Lawn pesticides are not tested in combinations in which they are frequently used, yet these combinations can be more toxic than the individual compound.
- Lawn pesticides are not tested in the formulations actually used and the so called "inert" ingredients can make the formulation more toxic than the pure active ingredient
- The breakdown products of these chemicals are not tested for toxicity or their persistence in the environment.

With so many unknowns and with evidence of harm to children, **it makes no sense to continue the use of these toxic lawn pesticides when there are safe, effective, affordable alternatives.**

There are Safe Effective Alternatives

There is now increasing experience with conversion to safe alternatives. For example, the town of Cheshire has finished the second season of conversion of its main football field and two baseball fields to pesticide-free organic care. The football field is very heavily used – over 50 events per season. Yet at the end of second season the football field's turf was in better condition than it was with conventional care. (See attached letter with an independent evaluation of the turf.)

This bill will protect the health of our children and even save children's lives. You may never know who these children are but you can take comfort in the fact that, by your actions, you have prevented great suffering of these children and their families.

PLEASE STOP PUTTING OUR CHILDREN AT RISK FROM THE INVOLUNTARY EXPOSURE TO TOXIC LAWN PESTICIDES AT SCHOOL.

Respectfully,

Jerome A. Silbert, M.D.

Jerome A. Silbert, M.D.
Executive Director
The Watershed Partnership, Inc.