



Connecticut Environmental Council

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**OPPOSED For Raised Bill 5121**

**An Act Concerning The Use Of Organic Pesticides On School Property And Authorizing Municipal Regulations Of The Use Of Pesticides On Residential Property**

To: The Honorable Senator Meyer, Co-Chair, The Honorable Richard Roy Co-Chair, The Honorable Andrew Maynard, Vice Chair and The Honorable Philip Miller, The Honorable Senator Roraback and The Honorable Clark Chapin and members of the Environment Committee.

CTEC is a membership organization representing associations and professionals. Our membership includes the Connecticut Groundskeepers Association, The Connecticut Tree Protective Association, The Connecticut Pest Control Association, Connecticut Irrigation Contractors Association and Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents and Connecticut Farm Bureau Association.

The Connecticut Environmental Council OPPOSES Raised Bill 5121, An Act Concerning The Use Of Organic Pesticides On School Property And Authorizing Municipal Regulations Of The Use Of Pesticides On Residential Property.

**We oppose an act concerning the use of organic pesticides on school property**

The Connecticut legislature voted to ban the use of pesticide products on school grounds with the intent to protect students; however, the consequences of such a restriction were not fully discussed or understood. Without the ability to judiciously use pesticide products to solve pest problems, groundskeepers, parks and recreation departments and municipalities face the challenge of keeping outdoor spaces playable and pest-free for safe use by students. Organic pesticides are still pesticides, they kill pests. Many have not been tested for their effect on human health nor on their effectiveness and are not regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency or our state Department of Energy and Environment.

According to citizens of Connecticut, the pesticide restriction has resulted in the following:

- **Unsafe athletic fields:** "Without IPM, we're faced with serious deterioration of athletic fields to the point of being unsafe. We are faced with increased costs with major field repairs... The increased presence of grubs, weeds, and soil compaction increases risk of injuries to our young athletes."-Ray Favreau, Director of Parks & Recreation in South Windsor  
"We've proven through double blind, peer-reviewed research submitted by William Dest, prof. emeritus from UCONN, better turf which is denser turf, reduces injuries ...IPM results in better turf, denser turf, than organic lawn care." – Gregg Foran, Parks Superintendent of Glastonbury.

- **Unkempt school grounds:** “We need IPM to maintain athletic fields, landscape beds, general grounds, pavement areas, weeds grow in pavement and sidewalks, current ban on pesticides and herbicides used on school grounds does not let us effectively maintain our grounds. If you walk our fields, you can see the conditions of our fields that we are banned from using any kinds of pesticides.” -Bill McMinn, Director of Facilities for the Town of Madison and Madison Public Schools
- **Lack of effective tools:** “Since the passing of the sunset provision back in 2009, we, as public grounds caretakers, have lost critical tools from our professional tool box. Just imagine a physician not being able to write prescriptions. They couldn’t get their job done efficiently, or effectively...” – Ray Favreau, Director of Parks & Recreation in South Windsor
- **Increased cost:** “Some problems can’t be solved with an organic-only approach or with manual labor alone. For example, if grubs take over a field, there isn’t an organic alternative to take care of the issue. We can use the least-toxic pesticide as a preventative treatment for approximately \$120 an acre. Or, if the grubs take over the field and we aren’t able to stop the problem, we’ll have to re-seed, potentially bring in new soil, and provide labor to re-generate the field and that can cost approximately \$2,000. Our ideal strategy would be to not have a problem in the first place, so we can spend the \$120 to be proactive or \$2,000 to be reactive and continue to have the potential for another issue.” – Phil Grande, owner/operator of Soundview Landscape

In addition, the removal of pesticide products from the pest control toolbox took away valuable defenses against serious vector-borne disease like West Nile Virus and Lyme Disease. According to the Connecticut Public Health department, Connecticut has the highest number of Lyme disease cases relative to population of any state.

**We oppose authorizing municipalities to regulate the use of pesticides on residential property.**

#### **Patchwork of Regulation Jeopardizes Health, Safety and our Business Environment**

The state must maintain usage for vector controls, pest management and keeping our public spaces healthy. When pesticide regulations are left to local government there is no coordination among adjoining jurisdictions or coexisting jurisdictions such as city and town governments. Pesticide applicators such as pest control and lawn care professionals operate across multiple jurisdictions crossing government boundaries, sometimes frequently, during a typical work day. Pesticide applicators are accustomed to complying with state laws and regulations. Learning about state pesticide laws and regulations are part of their training and licensing from the state. A patch work of local regulation would cause market place confusion and an enforcement “nightmare” for local governments. Regulating pesticides at the municipal level would be cumbersome for professional applicators and provides no added health, safety or property protections.

#### **The Department of Energy & Environment regulates the labeling, use and registration of pesticides.**

Municipalities do not have the staff, financial resources, or the expertise to regulate pesticides. The DEEP has the scientific resources and knowledgeable staff that work daily to ensure the safety and well-being of the public and the environment.

#### **The Majority of States Have Pesticide Preemption**

Connecticut has had a long standing statute and tradition of state pesticide preemption. Pesticide regulation falls under a state’s general law of concern. It affects public interest rather than merely just local interests, and is therefore, a statewide concern.

#### **Thoughtful use of pesticides is important to the well-being of Connecticut’s citizens.**

The safe and responsible use of pesticides reduces public health risks from disease carrying insects such as ticks and mosquitos and noxious weed pests and invasive weed pests such as poison ivy, ragweed and bittersweet.

*Making Connecticut’s Spaces and Places Beautiful, Safe and Pest-free.*

Sincerely,  
Edward Golinowski  
President