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**Written Testimony of Kim O'Rourke of City of Middletown, CT  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee  
March 16, 2012**

Testimony in Support of:  
**Bill 5121 An Act Concerning the Use of Organic Pesticides on School Property and  
Authorizing Municipal Regulation of the Use of Pesticides on Residential Property**

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and honorable members of the Environment Committee, my name is Kim O'Rourke and my testimony is in support of Bill 5121. I am the Recycling Coordinator for the City of Middletown and am pleased to represent Middletown's Project Green Lawn committee today. Thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue.

Our city's deep concern about the public and environmental health risks of lawn-care chemical use led to the development of Project Green Lawn, a collaborative public awareness campaign to encourage residents and businesses to maintain healthy, safe lawns free of chemicals that are harmful to people, pets and the environment. Considering the serious, well-documented health risks associated with traditional lawn-care chemicals, it is critical that our State continues to be a leader in protecting our health and our environment through reducing the use of toxic lawn chemicals and promoting the use of safe, organic lawn-care methods.

Project Green Lawn strongly supports removing the lawn-care pesticide preemption language and allowing municipalities to develop stricter standards for

lawn-care pesticide use than the federal or state government. It is surprising that this is not already allowed.

Every town in Connecticut is different, with different needs for protection of drinking water and other natural resources. In Middletown, we are not only concerned with the health of our residents, pets and our local environment, but also the wider “downstream” impacts of toxic lawn-care chemical use. These chemicals make their way into the environment through rain runoff and are passed along through the food chain contaminating fish and wildlife. Located on a major waterway and regional resource, the Connecticut River, and two of its tributaries, the Coginchaug and Mattabesset Rivers and with extensive wetlands and important reservoirs, Middletown’s environment is particularly sensitive. Lawn-care pesticides applied in Middletown can affect not only the city itself, but also neighboring communities and Long Island Sound. Middletown should be able to restrict the use of dangerous lawn-care chemicals if it chooses.

We are pleased to add that Middletown Mayor, Daniel T. Drew, is on the list of Mayors supporting this legislation. By removing this archaic policy, towns would be able to decide for themselves how to protect their local health and environment. It does not mandate that towns take action, but for those that want to, it gives them the right to do so.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this important matter.

*Kim O’Rourke, Middletown Recycling Coordinator*  
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