

The Watershed Partnership

March 15, 2012

From: Jerome A. Silbert, M.D., Executive Director
To: Senator Ed Meyer and Representative Dick Roy and honorable members of the Environment Committee
Subject: Bill 5121 An act concerning the use of pesticides on school property and authorizing municipal regulation of the use of pesticides on residential property.

Honorable members of the Environment Committee:

With respect to section 1 of the bill, I would be surprised and confused if there was any opposition to this proposal to allow additional lawn care products that are actually safe for humans and the environment.

As a physician, a pathologist, and executive director of a nonprofit environmental organization, I have studied the use and toxicity of lawn pesticides for over 15 years.

There is no doubt that many lawn pesticides can have toxic effects on humans and the environment, and that children and the child *in utero* are the most sensitive to these toxins.

It has been a rude awakening for me to realize that the industries that profit from these toxic compounds engage in deceptive practices to preserve their profits and that government has been far too accepting of the data presented to them by chemical companies.

There is a crisis of trust in both industry and government that continues to fester and increase among the general population. This is why the power to make stricter regulations with regards to these toxic chemicals needs to be given to local governments and their citizens who can respond to their own unique local circumstances.

For example, in Hamden there is an important drinking water reservoir located in an area full of suburban lawns. The storm drains from the streets empty into this reservoir. Shouldn't the town have the authority to restrict the use of toxic lawn pesticides in this area where toxic lawn chemicals can be easily washed into the reservoir after a storm?

A similar situation can exist over the recharge area of a public drinking water aquifer or in an area where the public depends on household wells.

By the way, why does this legislation only involve residential property when commercial property can also be a source of pollution and contamination?

The irony of the issue of the use of toxic lawn pesticides is that they are not needed to maintain safe, attractive, affordable lawns. The major "sacrifice" is that the lawns will have clover (and the occasional dandelion). Actually, clover benefits a lawn, it increases the fertility of the soil and is drought resistant. Before the chemical industry brainwashed us into believing it was a weed, it was deliberately added to grass seed to help make a healthy lawn.

Give the power back to the people where it belongs. Let local government and its citizens decide if they want stricter standards than the State of EPA who are far too accepting of the claims of the pesticide industry about product safety.

Respectfully,

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