

Connecticut Environment Committee
Public Hearing Testimony
March 2, 2012

Dear Representative Meyer, Representative Roy, Representative Miner and Environment Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised Bill No. 5260, AN ACT RESTRICTING THE USE OF CERTAIN CHEMICALS THAT ARE HARMFUL TO JUVENILE LOBSTERS.

The Northeastern Mosquito Control Association is a non-profit, educational organization of nearly 300 mosquito research and control professionals from New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Our objectives are; to promote the efficiency of mosquito abatement and related activities, through the encouragement of research, development of procedure, and the interchange of information; to circulate among its members and other interested parties pertinent knowledge relative to mosquito abatement and related subjects, and; to encourage field trips and meetings of its members.

I am writing you on behalf of the NMCA to express our opposition to this bill. Specifically, this bill would ban the introduction of pesticides containing malathion and methoprene into waterways or storm drains in Connecticut. Such an act would remove valuable tools used in mosquito (and other pest) control from a dwindling toolbox of available products, without any evidence that such a move would benefit lobster populations in Long Island Sound.

To shed some light on these products, malathion is used by public health mosquito control programs to kill adult mosquitoes. It is also used in other forms of pest control and is widely available for homeowner use for a variety of lawn and garden pests. It is applied to vegetation or sprayed as an ultra low volume (ULV) aerosol to contact and kill flying adult mosquitoes. It is not applied directly to waterways or catch basins, so banning the application of this product in water is irrelevant. Although malathion is registered for mosquito control in Connecticut, the state's Mosquito Management Program currently chooses not to use it, in favor of other available products.

Methoprene is applied to stagnant water to kill mosquito larvae. It is also widely used in veterinary and pet care for the control of fleas and ticks. Following the lobster die-off in Long Island Sound in 1998 and 1999, considerable research focused on finding the cause of the die-off, including research looking specifically at these pesticides. The data and modeling results have shown that, given the small amount of pesticide that is applied, the probability of achieving concentration levels sufficient to impact lobsters in Long Island Sound is negligible. In short, the NMCA is unaware of any scientific evidence linking methoprene to lobster mortality in the Sound.

The federal EPA registers pesticides, including mosquito larvicides containing methoprene and adulticides containing malathion, based on extensive and costly research

that concludes that, when used in accordance with the label, these products do not have negative impacts on lobsters or other non-target organisms. Furthermore, if there is any credible evidence to suggest that a pesticide may cause harm to the environment, individual states already have the statutory authority to cancel the registration or ban the use of a pesticide in that state. Connecticut nor any other state has banned the use of methoprene or malathion for mosquito or other pest control.

The passage of this bill will not provide a solution to the challenging issue of declining lobster populations in Long Island Sound. Significant research dealing directly with this issue has concluded that there is no connection between the use of mosquito pesticides and lobster die-offs. Furthermore, if passed, this bill would remove an invaluable tool for mosquito control and would have a serious rippling effect on vector control programs across the nation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. Should you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at president@nmca.org.

Sincerely,

Roger J. Wolfe

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President
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