

Written Testimony of
Rob Giampietro, CGCS at the Bull's Bridge Golf Club
Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents

SB 254, An Act Restricting the Application of Fertilizers that Contain Phosphate
Environment Committee
March 7, 2012

Good morning Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, Senator Roraback, Representative Chapin and the members of the Environment Committee my name is Rob Giampietro, I'm the golf course superintendent at the Bull's Bridge Golf Club in South Kent. I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony on Senate Bill 254, An Act Restricting the Application of Fertilizers that Contain Phosphates. In the way of background, I was the first employee at the club and have been there since construction began in 2002. We are one of a small group of golf courses in the country designated with the Audubon Silver Signature Sanctuary Certification. What does that mean? Amongst other things, a lot of water testing. The course is built on a mountain and has a 400' elevation change from the highest golf tee to the lowest golf green. That is to say the runoff during turf establishment was intense. We will spend \$36,000 this year on water testing. We test all runoff from the golf course and all adjacent homeowner wells. In ten years we haven't had any problems with phosphorous or anything else for that matter.

During construction we used phosphorous in our fertilizer blends to help establish the turf. One of the protocols was starter fertilizer even in the roughly 20 acres of turf buffering wetlands which was hydro seeded. Once established no phosphorous has been applied.

We test our soils annually and at no time since the initial grow-in has a test shown a deficiency in phosphorous and therefore none has been added. Other nutrients we have had to add are calcium, magnesium, potassium, and manganese. Phosphorous is held extremely tightly in the soil and in fact in most cases the only way phosphorous moves is when the soil itself is moved.

Golf Course Superintendents are well educated professionals and the best stewards of the land we have. We are essentially scientists and apply fertilizers in a precise calculated method to the targeted plants. With the ongoing budgetary constraints and expectations increasing we can't afford to make mistakes. Most golf courses may only use a phosphorous based fertilizer during overseeding to help juvenile seedlings mature. This is only 2-3 acres. Some higher end clubs may overseed fairways as well which could be up to 30 acres.

Golf courses should be allowed the continual use of phosphorous in a calculated and efficient way as the professionals applying the material are highly trained and are earning a living based upon the product they provide.

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to testify and I would be glad to answer any questions.