



**Testimony of
Bart Russell, Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the Planning & Development Committee
February 22, 2012**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) strongly supports HB-5155 AN ACT MODIFYING THE BAN ON PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS, which will help ensure that towns have the flexibility to manage athletic fields to protect the safety of student athletes as well as protect their considerable investment in developing fields and grounds.

COST has heard from numerous towns throughout Connecticut whose athletic fields, fence lines and school grounds simply cannot be maintained adequately and safely due to the restrictions on the use of Integrated Pest Management Plans.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is “an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices. IPM programs use current, comprehensive information on the life cycles of pests and their interaction with the environment. This information, in combination with available pest control methods, is used to manage pest damage by the most economical means, and with the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment.”

Under IPM, no action is taken to control pests or weeds until certain action thresholds are met, including determining whether insects, weeds or other living organisms are truly harmful. Many such organisms are innocuous or even beneficial. IMP also focuses on prevention, planting pest-resistant bushes, etc., which can be very effective and present little to no risk to people or the environment. This monitoring and identification removes the possibility that pesticides will be used when they are not really needed or that the wrong kind of pesticide will be used.

COST therefore *strongly supports* **HB-5155** which will modify the ban on pesticide applications on school grounds. In addition to being critical to maintaining, in a literal sense, a level playing field, free from holes, bumps and clumps of weeds that may cause injuries to young athletes, IPMs help control pests, many of which have been identified as allergy and/or asthma triggers.

IPM also helps protect the considerable investment that towns make in developing and maintaining school grounds and athletic fields. It is very difficult to explain to taxpayers why fields and grounds have been allowed to become overgrown with weeds and pests when cost-effective, safe methods are available to address these concerns.