
CT Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools

A nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting policies, practices and resources that protect school occupants from environmental health hazards

www.pollutionfreeschools.org

Testimony of Diane L. Ethier Pomfret Center, CT

Acting President, Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools
(ConnFESS)

National Education Association's representative to the School Asthma Education
Subcommittee of the National Institute of Health's National Asthma
Education and Prevention Program

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Written Testimony in opposition to H.B. 5155 - "AN ACT MODIFYING THE BAN ON
PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS"

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile and other members of the Planning &
Development Committee:

My name is Diane Ethier and I represent the CT Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools (ConnFESS), a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting policies, practices and resources that protect school occupants from environmental health hazards. By advocating for healthy indoor environments in CT schools, ConnFESS has been working to improve the health of students and staff in order to improve attendance, performance and productivity.

I am writing in opposition to H.B. 5155 - "AN ACT MODIFYING THE BAN ON PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS". This bill rolls back the current statutes banning the use of lawn-care pesticides on the grounds of public or private preschools and on grounds and athletic fields of public and private schools with grades K-8, except in emergencies that threaten the health and safety of the children, such as an underground wasp nest or an infestation of ticks. H.B. 5155 allows for the use of integrated pest management (IPM) on the grounds and playing fields of public and private schools with grades K-12, in other words it allows for the use of pesticides outside schools. The bill fails to provide language regulating preschools.

Outdoor pesticides become indoor environmental quality (IEQ) problems when they are tracked indoors and get embedded in carpets and when they drift indoors during application. Children can be exposed to these toxic chemicals indoors even if they are not in contact with the grass. Pesticides can exacerbate asthma and other existing health problems and cause new health issues to develop. Lawn chemicals used on school

grounds and playing fields have been shown to impact development and lead to behavioral disorders. Lawn pesticides can also contaminate well water on school grounds. Allowing our children to be involuntarily exposed to the unnecessary use of these toxic chemicals is unacceptable, especially when there are safe, effective, affordable alternatives that have already been used throughout Connecticut for several years.

Connecticut school children and employees need to be guaranteed a safe school environment, free of preventable health hazards. H.B. 5155 will expose children to increased levels of pesticide exposure at school, an exposure that is completely preventable under current law.