

Walter, Judith

From: Blancato, Allison
Sent: Wednesday, February 29, 2012 12:13 PM
To: Walter, Judith
Subject: FW: Information regarding HB 5155 - attached
Attachments: Myths and Facts CT.pdf

From: laurhughes@gmail.com [mailto:laurhughes@gmail.com] **On Behalf Of** Lauren Hughes
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2012 1:25 PM
To: Blancato, Allison
Subject: Information regarding HB 5155 - attached

Dear Ms. Blancato,

Attached please find the informational flyer for distribution to members of the Planning and Development Committee.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Lauren Hughes

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2/29/2012

Myths and Facts about Turf Pesticides, Children's Health, IPM and Connecticut's School Pesticide Law

Myth: The cost of maintaining fields without pesticides is "too high."

Fact: A 2010 white paper report using statistics from the U. S. Sports Turf Management Association and actual case studies of public and private schools using natural turf programs showed that over a five year period, the annual cost of a natural program was actually **less** than a program using chemical pesticides. The report is available at www.grassrootsinfo.org/pdf/turfcomparisonreport.pdf

Myth: The pesticides used on school fields are all approved by the EPA.

Fact: Because pesticides are toxic to humans and other forms of life, the EPA requires that they be registered and monitored carefully. This does not imply safety. In fact, it is a violation of federal law to claim that any pesticide is "safe," even when used as directed. There are no pesticides that have ever been tested for their health effects on children.

Myth: The EPA is going to mandate the use of IPM programs in the future, so there is no need for Connecticut's law.

Fact: "Integrated Pesticide Management" or "IPM" is an industry-developed initiative, designed primarily to retard the implementation of policies and regulations that limit the market for chemical pesticides. While the industry may indeed persuade the EPA to adopt a regulation requiring the use of IPM at schools, chemical companies know that this will probably not reduce the use of pesticides. It certainly will not protect children from the serious neurological and biological effects associated with pesticide exposure.

Myth: Soil compaction is a problem with natural fields

Fact: This is false. Aeration (to relieve compaction) is an essential part of any sports turf program, chemical or natural. Properly maintained natural fields usually have fewer compaction issues because of the active biomass and increased aeration. Compaction is most often associated with poorly aerated, chemically-maintained fields.

Myth: Without chemicals, grubs will ruin my fields

Fact: Grub infestations typically affect fields that have no natural predators - in other words, fields where pesticides have wiped out the population of beneficial microbes that feed on grubs. Although grubs have been found in natural fields, their numbers are usually limited and there are various methods available to address them, including 25b pesticides.

Myth: Natural fields have clover that attracts bees, which can be dangerous for children.

Fact: Clover is a nitrogen-fixing plant that nature has designed to help remediate poor

soil conditions. For many years, clover was part of every grass seed mix. Today's seed mixes do not include clover, although new advances in genetics has resulted in "micro-clover" which most turf experts believe will play a crucial role in turf grass fertilization. Existing clover can usually be managed with proper fertilization and over-seeding.

Myth: The Connecticut law prevents turf managers from being able to use pesticides even in emergency situations.

Fact. This is false. The law provides ample opportunities for local officials to authorize the use of pesticides in the event of any public health emergency.

Myth: Natural fields are filled with bare spots, mud holes and other dangerous conditions.

Fact: Fields that have these kinds of problems reflect a lack of knowledge or commitment on the part of turf managers. Chemical pesticides do not grow grass, fill bare spots or prevent mud holes. Every professional turf grass expert and association acknowledges that a thick carpet of healthy grass is the way to combat these problems, and the best way to do *that* is to grow grass, not poison the ground.

Myth: There are no school systems using natural methods successfully.

Fact: Hundreds of school systems are using natural methods, and many have done so for years. New York State (which now has more stringent pesticide legislation than Connecticut) has been a leader in this field, and over the past seven years Grassroots has trained hundreds of school personnel in the science of natural turf management.

Myth: Training in natural turf maintenance is expensive.

Fact: In the fall of 2010, Grassroots contacted every school and town in the state of Connecticut, offering free natural turf training and follow-up support. Not everyone took advantage of the offer. If necessary, we are prepared to offer the courses again for those individuals who couldn't make it the first time, or for those who are having problems with their fields.

On behalf of the children of Connecticut, we are committed to making this work.

