

TO: Members of the Planning and Development Committee

RE: Testimony on HB 5155

I believe that used properly the Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM) provides the best maintenance of our athletic fields and can be done safely. I understand the concern of people who want to ban the use of pesticides, and people in the Parks and Recreation profession are also concerned about safety of the kids who play on the fields. However, IPM can be done safely, and it is effective.

In 2005, the Town of Guilford adopted the IPM modeled after the DEEP program. Since then, we have used limited pesticides, mostly for grubs and crabgrass control. The products had been applied when kids were not in school, such as April vacation or late summer and were watered in or applied before rain on non-irrigated fields.

For the treatment of grubs, we had dug test pits at various sections of the field to determine the level of infestation. If there were a few grubs, that area was not treated. We also notified the school, the youth sports groups and other school personnel of areas we planned to treat for grubs or crabgrass. The schools then notified anyone on their notification list.

Our cultural practices also help limit turf damage. We mow the grass 2"-2 1/2" height and we close fields that are too wet for play. Mower blades are sharpened weekly. We aerate and top-dress fields periodically with an organic material.

Since the ban on pesticides, we have seen an infestation of grubs on a few fields that cannot be treated. Last summer/ early fall, large portions of grass were uprooted by our mower due to grub damage. We re-seeded the areas, and some of the seed germinated, but the fields were still actively being used.

A problem at one elementary school is a flock of 100 or more geese that leave droppings. The Principal has contacted me for a solution to remove the geese. I researched a four-page document from DEEP and a chemical repellent is one of the effective solutions. Many of the other options are not as effective, such as fake coyotes (we tried that), hazing, and trained dogs. The Principal does not like to have the students on the fields during recess due to the volume of goose droppings and the possible health issues. IPM would allow us to treat the field to reduce the level of geese feeding there.

I believe that the IPM program that we had adopted allowed us to better maintain the athletic fields on school grounds in a safe way that provided better quality playing conditions that our community demands.

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