



Town of Manchester

LEO V. DIANA, MAYOR
JAY MORAN, DEPUTY MAYOR
LISA P. O'NEILL, SECRETARY

41 Center Street • P.O. Box 191
Manchester, Connecticut 06045-0191
www.manchesterct.gov

DIRECTORS
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February 21, 2012

Raised Bill No. 5155 – An Act Modifying the Ban on Pesticide Applications on School Grounds

Dear Honorable Members of the Planning & Development Committee:

I am submitting this testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 5155, as it provides for a reasonable approach that allows for the application of certain pesticides on school grounds under an Integrated Pest Management plan (IPM).

In 2010 the ban on utilizing Integrated Pest Management on elementary school fields went into effect, disallowing sustainable approaches to the control of weeds and insects; jeopardizing the quality, and in some cases, the safety, of playing fields.

Under this legislation, the use of an IPM plan will provide for well-maintained athletic fields, and thereby:

- Minimize the potential for injuries to student athletes.
- Protect the substantial investments towns have made in athletic fields and school grounds.
- Regulate and greatly reduce the amount of pest control utilized for maximum effectiveness.
- Require that IPM trained, regulated and licensed professionals apply pest controls under the direction of D.E.E.P. approved regulations.

Organic compost currently costs approximately \$50 per cubic yard. A single application of the compost as a soil amendment requires approximately 67 cubic yards per acre. Under proper maintenance practices for playing fields, two applications per year of compost, or 134 cubic yards per acre, per year are required.

The Town of Manchester currently maintains twenty-nine ball fields, ten soccer fields, and two football fields. Conservative estimates would require 1,600 cubic yards of organic compost on an annual basis just for these athletic fields. The cost of this organic compost material alone if purchased at \$50 per cubic yard would be approximately \$80,000 annually. This does not include the cost of materials for other lawn areas maintained at schools or parks, nor does it include significant cost to purchase the new equipment necessary apply the organic compost



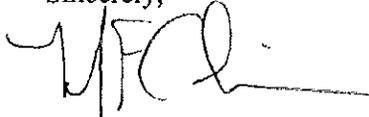
mixture or the additional staffing needed to prepare, mix and spread the compost, when compared to methods under an IPM plan.

The cost to maintain athletic fields in a comparable condition using only organic land care methods is dramatically more than under an IPM plan and the results have shown that the condition of the fields after several years is not comparable. Municipalities do not have the additional staff or financial resources to implement organic land care to their currently over-programmed athletic fields.

This is not a cost issue. It is about a municipality's ability to maintain its athletic fields in a comparable condition to today's standards and expectations under the same demanding usage. Without an IPM plan, the quality of the playing surfaces has and will continue to suffer to a point that some fields will be deemed to be unplayable.

I strongly urge the Committee to pass Raised Bill 5155.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MFC', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark F. Carlino
Director of Public Works

c: Scott Shanley, General Manager
Ken Longo, Field Services Superintendent
Scott Sprague, Parks & Recreation Director