



Town of South Windsor

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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

February 22, 2012

HB 5155 Testimony

Delivered by: Ray Favreau, Director of Parks & Recreation, Town of South Windsor and member of National Recreation & Park Association, CT Recreation & Parks Association, New England Parks Association professional organizations with other department staff members also belonging to CT Parks Association, CT Tree Protection Association, CT Tree Warden Association, and the CT Grounds Keeper Association

Thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of the Town of South Windsor.

We respectfully request that the legislation reconsider the current law (PA 09-56) and lift the ban on Integrated Pest Management (IPM). As such, we fully support House Bill 5155 to "*modify the ban on certain pesticide applications on school grounds*", and to restore the mandatory IPM plans to be used on public and private school grounds in CT to manage pest control on athletic fields and facilities with regulations and oversight under the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Since the passing of the sunset provision back in 2009 we, as public grounds care takers, have lost critical tools from our professional tool box. Imagine a physician without the ability to write prescriptions or carry a stethoscope in their bag, or a car mechanic without a socket wrench set in their chest – they couldn't get the job done efficiently and effectively, or provide the necessary care. At best, it makes the job much more difficult with less success and acceptable results. However, when each of these is readily available and used properly tremendous care is given and preservation achieved. This too is true of IPM – without it we are faced with serious deterioration of athletic fields to the point of being unsafe, we are left with little to no remedial options for treatment of problems such as weeds and insects and we are faced with increased costs associated with major field repairs and the limited array of "permissible" products.

Like many other towns and cities across the state we have been face with rapidly declining fields and large expenses in attempts to rehabilitate them. The increased presence of grubs in fields has attracted rodents, who literally tear up turf leaving dangerous holes and low spots increasing the risk of player injury. Species such as crabgrass invade and the soil in turn hardens, not always responding to aeration also causing an increased risk of injury to young athletes. Additionally, weed infested sidewalks and parking lots have to be treated manually and/or mechanically which is labor intensive, costly, causes reduced life of the pavement and concrete and has extremely short-lived results.

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But, when used properly - which calls for the prudent use of EPA and DEEP regulated pesticides by trained and licensed individuals when non-chemical measures have been unable to eradicate the problem – tremendous, successful and safe results are achieved at reasonable costs. With the ability to improve and sustain field playability and safe conditions sports injuries, their associated medical expenses and municipal liability is reduced. IPM is a proven solidly effective mechanism and a recognized “best practice” for managing and controlling pests on fields and facilities.

Many on the opposite side of this issue continue to cite the harmful hazards of pesticides many of which reference “residential”, or “home and garden” uses, not controlled licensed and moderated use as we are advocating. Under the current regulation the short term effects have been crippling, remaining there long term will be devastating. It is critical that this situation be rectified quickly.

Please reconsider the contents of our tool box so that we can maintain all school grounds as you currently allow us to do with our town halls, town centers, and public parks with safe regulated IPM practices. The United States EPA has recommended IPM as a safe, cost effective method of pest control. The diligent use of pesticides with a balance of natural techniques under an IPM plan in K-12 schools, both public and private is a reasonable approach.

We feel confident the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection can protect the environment, and the people of the great State of Connecticut, by adopting regulations in accordance with chapter 54 of section 10-231b.

Thank you for listening.