

PUBLIC HEARING – February 22, 2012  
Committee on Planning and Development

Testimony Submitted by Raymond E. Purtell, Director of Parks & Recreation, Town of Glastonbury

**SUPPORT**

**Proposed HB 5155**

**An Act Modifying the Ban on Pesticide Applications on School Grounds**

I am writing as the general manager responsible for the oversight of the care and maintenance of all school grounds in Glastonbury, including lawn areas and athletic fields.

I am an active member of both the Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association and the Connecticut Park Association. The membership of both organizations is largely comprised of professionals that are responsible for the care and maintenance of public parks including school grounds. Both organizations support the use of IPM.

Please accept this letter of support for HB 5155 An Act Modifying the Ban on Pesticide Applications on School Grounds.

Use of Integrated Pest Management principles and practices dramatically reduces the need for and use of pesticides on ornamental turf. Cultural practices associated with growing a vigorous healthy stand of grass include proper mowing height, mowing frequency, watering, aeration, fertilization, maintaining soil PH balance, scouting and establishing thresholds that must be exceeded before pest treatment becomes actionable. Spot applications are the norm. The days of routine broadcast applications have been gone for years. The continued selective and judicious use of pesticides is needed and is only one tool required to maintain safe playing surfaces for student athletes.

HB 5155 includes provisions that are more than sufficient to protect the public and safeguard the environment. They include (1) all applications are to be made by a State licensed pesticide applicator with supervisory certification under Section 22a-54 or a licensed pesticide applicator with operational certification under the direct supervision of a supervisory pesticide applicator, (2) school staff and parents/guardians of school children are provided with a written statement including a summary of the pest management plan for the school each year; (3) staff and students may register for PRIOR notification of planned pesticide applications; (4) applications cannot be made during regular school hours or during planned activities; (5) each school is required to maintain a registry of persons requesting prior notice of planned applications; (6) records of all applications are maintained for a period of 5 years; and, MOST IMPORTANTLY, (7) all school systems are required to practice Integrated Pest Management consistent with the model plan developed by DEP under Section 22a-661.

The provisions of HB 5155 will allow the continued use of traditional means, as well as, organic methods in the care of school grounds. Passage of this legislation will permit the use of several organic pesticides that by definition would not be able to be used otherwise.

The Third National Report on Human Health Exposure to Environmental Chemicals 2005, prepared by the staff at the Environmental Health Laboratory at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), indicates that there is very limited scientific information available on potential human health effects of pesticides at levels presented for the U.S. population. The report adds that more research is needed before it can be determined if there is cause for health concern.

Until such time as more scientific research is completed and findings determined, continued emphasis on the use of IPM as a means to minimize the use of pesticides, both organic and traditional, is essential.

Raymond E. Purtell  
Director of Parks & Recreation