



**Testimony
Betsy Gara, Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the
Education Committee
February 15, 2013**

RE: HB-6385, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF PESTICIDES AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The health and safety of our children is of paramount concern to our communities.

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) has heard from several towns that are having difficulty maintaining athletic fields, fence lines and school grounds due to the restrictions on the use of Integrated Pest Management Plans (IPM). According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, IPM, which permits the judicious use of pesticides under very limited circumstances to ensure the safety of athletic fields and school grounds are “an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices.”

Athletic fields that fall into disrepair due to pest infestations create hazardous situations for children. If a school or town is unable to control pests using other methods and certain thresholds are met, IPM provides a mechanism for addressing the problem to ensure the fields are safe for our children to play on.

At the same time, communities want to make sure that state laws and policies involving the use of pesticides are effective in protecting the health and safety of our children. Clearly, issues involving the use of Integrated Pest Management Plans are very complex.

As such, it is our understanding that the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), legislators and other stakeholders are establishing a task force to fully review these issues. A task force that includes stakeholders from various groups with expertise in these issues would be best positioned to develop thoughtful, reasonable policies governing the use of IPM on school grounds and athletic fields.

We therefore urge committee members to **reject HB-6385** and, instead, support efforts to convene a task force of stakeholders to thoroughly review issues involving IPM and recommend policies that will protect our students.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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