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Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile and members of the Environment Committee:

I am testifying with regard to Committee Bill No. 5480: An Act Requiring An Assessment of the Use of Certain Pesticides at the University of Connecticut Research Farm.

I live in the Storrs Heights community, adjacent to the University of Connecticut experimental research farm.

For the past several years residents have been meeting with University officials to ask them to reveal to us exactly what chemical compounds have been applied to the soil at this farm. As a user of water from a domestic well, knowing what is going into the ground right next to my home is a crucial concern.

I have become particularly concerned since the University began research into proprietary substances to be used in turf grass. Data has been provided to us about only some of the chemical applications in use: the proprietary ones have been kept secret in deference to the company or companies paying for the research. I believe the University has no business applying possibly dangerous substances to the soil in the middle of a residential area dependent on domestic water wells. And we cannot get essential information about this because the University has a private contract with a commercial corporation.

Committee Bill 5480 is a beginning, in that it brings this issue to public attention, however the text of this bill needs revision to include concrete requirements that the University disclose at once all chemical compounds in use at their experimental farm, without exception for any reason.

If the farm is to continue to operate in a close residential neighborhood, it must be required to place the safety and health of citizens before any other factors. If our water becomes contaminated by a toxic, possibly unknown experimental compound, it will be too late. Ground water cannot be restored.