

## SUPPORT AND TESTIMONY TO THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE February 25, 2013

Co-Chairs: Senator Edward Meyer and Representative Linda Gentile

**I am in support of the following bills, and would like to offer testimony on SB 916**

**SB 916 AN ACT AUTHORIZING CIVIL PENALTIES FOR THE FAULTY, CARELESS OR NEGLIGENT APPLICATION OF PESTICIDES.**

S.B. No. 914 AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF PESTICIDES AT MUNICIPAL PARKS

S.B. No. 916 AN ACT AUTHORIZING CIVIL PENALTIES FOR THE FAULTY, CARELESS OR NEGLIGENT APPLICATION OF PESTICIDES.

S.B. No. 917 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE USE OF CERTAIN MICROBIAL AND BIOCHEMICAL PESTICIDES AND GRUB CONTROL PRODUCTS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS.

H.B. No. 6440 AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPALITIES AND THE APPLICATION OF LAWN CARE PESTICIDES.

My name is Sue Riedeman. I very much wanted to come and testify in person, however I have a medical condition that prevents me from being able to attend the hearing today.

I have severe disabling chemical sensitivities and react to extremely low levels of chemicals that would normally be considered safe. I'm especially sensitive to pesticides and herbicides. My daily life is spent avoiding chemicals as much as I possibly can. I have to use all nontoxic and unscented cleaning and personal care products. I eat organic foods, I have to wear organic clothes, I sleep on an organic bed, I use organic pest control, and I maintain my lawn organically. I never ever walk on any lawns that have been chemically treated due to severe reactions I've had in the past. For this reason, I am on the pesticide notification list. According to Connecticut law, pesticide applicators are required to notify me in advance of any lawn applications to properties that abut mine.

As you can imagine, it's very difficult to avoid being exposed to chemicals in today's society, but for me, my home has been my safe haven. There have been no pesticides used on my property in over 20 years, until last spring when a nationally known lawn care company trespassed on my property and carelessly doused my yard with a cocktail of poisons. The chemical mixture they applied included a chemical fertilizer and four herbicides (some banned in other countries) and other inert and trade secret chemicals.

I was at home at the time, and the applicator failed to knock on my door or notify me he was at my house. I first noticed a strong chemical smell in my bedroom. I then went outside, not knowing my lawn had just been sprayed, and smelled an *overpowering* chemical smell. I had an immediate adverse reaction. My eyes were burning, my skin was burning and itchy, my throat became very sore. I became disoriented, and extremely fatigued. My neighbor, who was working in her yard soon after the application, reported to me that she also felt sick and had to go inside and lie down

After this reckless application of poisons to my property, I continued to experience adverse health effects, and was not able to open my windows for the entire summer season. My air conditioner was contaminated and could not be used. I literally became a prison in my own home, and was unable to walk on my lawn, sit in the sun, garden etc. I consulted with a toxicologist regarding the half-life of the herbicides that were used, and learned that one of the herbicides used has a half-life of 120 days. **This means it could be 2 years or more before all of the herbicides are gone from my property.**

I reported this incident to the CT DEEP, and was astonished to learn that there was no law in Connecticut to penalize a company for applying pesticides to the wrong property. How is it possible that applying poisons to someone's property, who not only doesn't want them, but is extremely sickened by them, is not considered a misapplication of pesticides?

I don't know how often these types of mistakes are taking place. I'm sure many such incidents go unreported, but I have spoken to two other people who said their lawns were accidentally sprayed as well. The applicator who

sprayed my yard blamed his mistake on his GPS devise. A simple knock on my door would have prevented this nightmare from happening to me.

There are many people who react adversely to pesticides and/or chose not to be exposed to them due to health concerns. We urgently need penalties in place that will punish pesticide applicators who carelessly apply pesticides to the wrong property

On order to make certain applying pesticides to the wrong property is considered a misapplication of pesticides punishable by a fine of up to \$2,500, I would suggest adding the words **including applying pesticides to the wrong property** under sections 18 (Lines 59 and 60)