



State of Connecticut

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February 25, 2013

Against H.B. No. 6438 (RAISED) AN ACT RESTRICTING THE USE OF METHOPRENE AND RESMETHRIN

I would like to thank the Honorable Co-Chairs Senator Ed Meyer and Representative Linda Gentile , the Honorable Vice Chairs Senator Andrew Maynard and Representative James Albis, and the Ranking Members Senator Clark Chapin and Representative John Shaban, and the entire membership of the Environment Committee for their time this morning addressing this issue.

I understand how contentious the issue is. In fact, I am reluctant to step forward to criticize this bill again, but I believe both sides of the argument should be considered. Last year I put in a great deal of time researching lobster shell disease and the die off issue in Long Island Sound. I was one of the few voices on the floor of the House against legislation banning the use of methoprene. I still believe we would be making a significant mistake by banning the use of methoprene today.

Numerous studies have failed to make the link between Methoprene and lobster shell disease or lobster die-off. While methoprene is toxic to lobsters, it is unlikely to be found in high enough concentrations to affect lobsters. This is due to the fact that methoprene degrades quickly in water and sunlight. Literature suggests that outbreaks of shell disease started in 1996, before methoprene was used. Many scientists still believe water temperature, an acute mortality event (the 1996 oil spill), chronic shell disease, and overfishing account for the decline in lobster population in Long Island Sound. In 2010 UConn study, our own Professor Hans Laufer attributed lobster shell disease in the sound to chemicals, such as bisphenol A, found in plastics. By the way, we spent around \$250,000 on the study.

Today advocates may believe they have been completely vindicated because they finally found a lobster with methoprene in its tissues. Scientists have guarded against taking action based on one sample. I say finding one lobster out of the hundreds tested over the years is not a reason to reject the evidence against methoprene as the cause of the lobster problem. More importantly, one lobster is not the reason to stop searching for the real cause of the issue, in addition to further research into methoprene. I urge the committee to resist the political pressure and let our scientists do their job and attempt to confirm the research.

The bottom line is methoprene is still a safe, cost effective solution to our mosquito problems and there is no conclusive data to suggest otherwise. If there were, I would be co-sponsoring the bill myself. If the

committee pushes forward with this bill, I sincerely hope the replacement to methoprene is just as nontoxic to humans. While I am concerned about mosquito borne illness, I am more concerned about a decision to ban a well-tested, safe solution to control mosquitos in favor of a substitute that is more toxic to humans.