

**Oral Testimony of Micaela Porta of Pesticide-Free New Canaan  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee,  
February 25, 2013**

Testimony in Support of: H.B. 6440 AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPALITIES AND THE APPLICATION OF LAWN CARE PESTICIDES.

My name is Micaela Porta and my testimony is in support of **HB 6440**. I live in New Canaan and am representing Pesticide-Free New Canaan, with a membership of over 200 and partnerships with the New Canaan Nature Center, with 800 members, as well as New Canaan Town Hall's Conservation Commission.

But my most important role is as a parent and wife, to a family living with asthma and learning disabilities, both conditions linked to and aggravated by chemical pesticide exposure. I also value my friendships with many elderly in our community, whose compromised immune systems also make them vulnerable to the effects of these chemicals.

- We support H.B. 6440 on the grounds that it would give our town government a way to identify a pesticide problem specific to our community, and to take decisive action toward its remediation, rather than depending on the State to do so. It's our belief that the State simply cannot act as quickly or specifically to our local concerns and is less incentivized to do so.
- We enjoy committed and distinguished leadership in New Canaan, not only from our elected representatives, but from a highly engaged base of citizen activists and volunteers. We trust in our municipality's ability to discern what pesticide application might pose a significant threat to our community's public health and environment and how to deal with it accordingly.
- Only now are we in New Canaan, with the help of Pesticide-Free New Canaan and other partners, beginning to collect data on pesticide levels. We really don't know what we're going to find, but we welcome the ability to deal with our issues locally.
- Situations specific to New Canaan include the Nature Center, which last year lost an entire hive of bees from pesticide poisoning, the Waveny Care Center, which provides post-operative and elder care and is situated on the grounds of parkland that is chemically treated, the Five Mile and Silvermine Rivers. These rivers also feed into the Sound, impacting marine ecosystems and health in coastal towns. What we apply on our lands upstream matters beyond our town, so we must be able to act quickly or better, to prevent problems.
- We also believe that the rights of individuals will be duly protected by this bill, because it necessitates a number of steps to show consensus within the town, and analysis and review at the State level prior to the allowance of any municipal regulation.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.