

Testimony to the Environment Committee – February 25, 2013

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, and members of the Environment Committee, my name is Jane Brawerman and I am a resident of Middletown, CT. I am writing in support of the following four bills addressing use of lawn care chemicals, concerning which I have both a professional (as the Executive Director of a conservation organization) and personal interest (as a parent and organic gardener).

I support the following bills because the widespread application of toxic lawn care chemicals, used essentially for aesthetic purposes, poses many serious and well-documented health and environmental risks. People are exposed to these chemicals directly when sprayed on lawns and turf, and are also exposed when wells, aquifers and reservoirs become contaminated. Exposure to certain widely used lawn care chemicals is associated with increased risk of asthma, childhood and adult cancers, birth defects, and reproductive problems, among others. Lawn chemicals also make their way into the environment through rain runoff and drift, and are passed along through the food chain, contaminating fish and wildlife. Given that there are viable and safe alternative lawn and turf care methods, why would we put people, especially our children who are most vulnerable, our pets, and the environment at risk?

**S.B. No. 914 AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF PESTICIDES AT MUNICIPAL PARKS:** Our parks, where families come to recreate with their pets, are no place for toxic chemicals! People and pets are exposed when they play in areas treated with lawn care chemicals, then can track them into their homes, exposing them further. Applying the same restrictions as required for application of pesticides at day care centers will help protect the public from exposure.

**S.B. No. 916 AN ACT AUTHORIZING CIVIL PENALTIES FOR THE FAULTY, CARELESS OR NEGLIGENT APPLICATION OF PESTICIDE:** Given the toxic nature of pesticides, it's critical that the public is protected from misuse or negligence by applicators. I was shocked to learn recently that if a lawn care company mistakenly applies toxic lawn care chemicals to someone's property, there is no legal recourse. This is plain wrong! I can't imagine how I would feel if my yard was sprayed by accident, which would not only expose my family, but would result in poisoning of my garden produce and the beneficial pollinators that support production, and long-term damage to the soil biology and to my ability to grow my food organically. And the lawn care company wouldn't be liable?

**S.B. No. 917 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE USE OF CERTAIN MICROBIAL AND BIOCHEMICAL PESTICIDES AND GRUB CONTROL PRODUCTS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS:** These safe, non-toxic products should be allowed when necessary, but I only support this bill if there are no amendments or additions.

**H.B. No. 6440 AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPALITIES AND THE APPLICATION OF LAWN CARE PESTICIDES:** Municipalities should have the right to control use of harmful lawn care chemicals if they determine it's in their best interest—for example to protect public drinking water supplies. This bill would simply give towns the authority to adopt stricter regulations than the State. Why shouldn't municipalities be able to decide how best to protect the health of their residents and the local environment?

I respectfully urge your support of these critical bills. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.