

# The Watershed Partnership, Inc.

## Testimony to Environment Committee

Re Public Hearing on February 19, 2014

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**RE: SB-68 Allowing additional safe products for turf care.**

**Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,**

**My name is Dr. Jerry Silbert. I am a physician trained in Pathology, Laboratory Medicine, and Environmental Health. I am also director of The Watershed Partnership, Inc., a nonprofit environmental organization.**

**I reviewed the testimony of the opponents of SB-68. I was so naïve. I had thought that pro-pesticide people would welcome additional products they could use for non-toxic turf care. Wrong. They trashed SB-68 and said that they wanted ALL their toxic pesticides back. In other words they want IPM - a code word for “business as usual.”**

**Their argument is that non-toxic care does not work and their fields have deteriorated. Their fields may well have deteriorated. But we know that athletic fields can be perfectly playable with properly done non-toxic care. The explanation for their failure is either lack of knowledge, lack of motivation, or a deliberate strategy to allow the fields to fail.**

**I am reminded of a Facilities Director, a former chair of the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association’s Legislative Committee that was opposed to the lawn pesticide ban. In a letter to his colleagues he said, “*ULTIMATELY, IT MAY TAKE THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR FIELDS, DESPITE OUR BEST EFFORTS, TO SHOW THE LEGISLATORS THE ERROR OF THEIR WAYS.*” Perhaps they took his advice (except for making a “best effort”).**

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Perfectly playable and safe sports fields are possible without the use of toxic lawn pesticides. This has been amply demonstrated in Connecticut and in New York for over 4 years.

Playable sports fields are important, but ultimately this is not about grass. This is about the health of hundreds of thousands of children in Connecticut. This is about a mother taking her young child with leukemia to the hospital for chemotherapy, this is about the high school athlete about to start college just diagnosed with lymphoma, this is about a baby born with birth defects, or parents helping their child adjust to life with severe asthma. We all know of the suffering and expense that serious illness and disease can cause.

If elected municipal officials really care about the health of children in their town and want playable fields, they should find someone who actually can do non-toxic turf care successfully and not use those who complain it can't be done.

If state legislators really care about the health of Connecticut's children, they should repudiate the misguided efforts of those who want to continue to spread these poisons on playing fields and put our children at risk.

Respectfully,

*Jerry Silbert, M.D.*

**The Watershed Partnership, Inc.**

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**P.S. See my previous testimony with suggestions for technical improvements to SB-68. In particular 1) removing 2b and substituting the clause for 25b products, and 2) adding the phrase "in a tamper resistant container" to the clause on pesticide bait.**

Dr. Silbert is a physician trained in pathology and laboratory medicine and Executive Director of the Watershed Partnership a nonprofit environmental organization. He has worked closely with the towns of Branford and Cheshire to help them successfully achieve perfectly playable non-toxic sports fields. He has experience in successfully treating grubs with nematodes in Branford. **All the fields and parks in Branford and Cheshire have been treated without the use of toxic lawn pesticides for over 4 years!**

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