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### Environment Committee – March 17, 2014

#### Written Testimony on SB 443 -An Act Concerning Pesticides on School Grounds, Parks, Playgrounds, Athletic Fields and Municipal Greens

Good Afternoon Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, Senator Chapin, Representative Shaban and members of the Environment Committee. My name is David G. Lenihan and I am the legislative liaison for the Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO). I am also a retired School Business Manager with over 14 years of experience in this field and a past president of CASBO.

CASBO is a non-profit professional association that represents school business officials (SBOs) throughout the state of Connecticut. SBO's are responsible for most aspects of school business and operations. This includes, but not limited to, developing and monitoring school district budgets, as well as overseeing school maintenance and operations, including field preparation and care.

To this end, CASBO has always made the safety of children its highest priority. We realize that we do not live in a risk free world and that it is impossible to shield children from all risks. Our goals are to identify all risks associated with school safety and develop comprehensive programs that will manage and mitigate such risks in a safe, reliable and cost effective manner. It is within this context that we make the following comments.

Since July 1, 2010, there has been a ban on the use of EPA registered pesticides on public school grounds K to 8. Since the ban has been in place, many school fields have been damaged severely and some rendered unplayable, despite the efforts of grounds staff to maintain these fields using more expensive organic materials and/or labor-intensive manual procedures. Simply stated, these materials and procedures are not effective in addressing pest problems on school grounds.

As a result, not only have pest populations grown without controls but other unintended consequences have occurred. These include, but not limited to, invasive plants (i.e. poison ivy), ticks, tree disease, and playing surfaces that are very hard and uneven. All these issues present serious health and safety hazards to our students.

We are concerned that SB 443 extends this ineffective ban and its unintended risks, beyond school grounds. Any efforts to expand the ban on pesticide use to other municipal areas and athletic fields will lead to many of these areas becoming unsafe and, in the case of municipal athletic fields, unplayable. Consequently, we respectfully request that you not move forward with this proposed bill.

CASBO, as well as many other municipal organizations, instead believes that a comprehensive, balanced approach that safely controls pests and addresses all other safety issues is a far better way to ensure the safety of all our children.

CASBO fully supports the U.S. EPA recommended Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to care for all school grounds. IPM is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach that worked very successfully on school grounds prior to the ban and we believe will be safe and effective in the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.