

The Watershed Partnership, Inc.

Monday, March 17, 2014

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In support of SB-443, extending the pesticide ban to parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, and municipal greens. Especially with the attached changes.

Honorable members of the Environment Committee:

The scientific evidence is clear. Lawn pesticides can harm children. This conclusion is found in numerous peer reviewed studies. A recent review of the scientific literature by the American Academy of Pediatrics emphasized this fact. In a letter (attached) from the principle authors of this review, they commended Connecticut's school pesticide ban as more protective of children than so called "Integrated Pest Management" (IPM) that is advocated by the ban's opponents.

Dr. Philip Landrigan, an internationally recognized expert on the environment and children's health also praised Connecticut for it's policy on protecting children from toxic lawn pesticides and said that Connecticut's policy was more protective than IPM and should not be compromised (attached).

The scientific evidence is clear. Children and the child in utero are particularly vulnerable to toxins such as lawn pesticides. Children eat more food, drink more fluids, breath more air and have more skin area per pound of body weight than adults. Children can't defend against toxic chemicals as well as adults. The child in utero is exquisitely sensitive to toxic chemicals and endocrine disrupters that can cause irreversible harm to the development of the brain and other organs.

These facts make it clear that it is a moral duty to prevent harm to children from these toxic chemicals.

What stands in the way of doing what is so obviously right?

You will hear testimony from opponents of this bill saying that without toxic pesticides it is not possible and too costly to maintain safe, playable athletic fields. **THIS IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE.**

There are many school fields in CT and NY that are not using toxic pesticides. They look fine and are perfectly playable. The reason some fields are deteriorating is because of lack of knowhow or lack of motivation or both. With the right knowledge and the right motivation, perfectly playable fields are definitely possible

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Is non-toxic care too costly? It is not. Actually it can be less costly than conventional care using toxic pesticides once the health and productivity of the soil is restored. (see attached cost studies)

I sincerely believe that the opponents to this bill have no wish to harm children. I sincerely want to see them be as successful as those who are maintaining perfectly playable non-toxic fields. I would, with all due respect, ask them to show their sincerity by visiting the successful fields and talking to the groundskeepers to learn how to maintain successful non-toxic fields for the children they care so much about.

But ultimately, this is not about grass. This is about children with cancer. This is about children with leukemia. This is about children with birth defects, This is about children with learning disabilities.

Honorable members of the Environment Committee, you did the right thing to consider this bill and you will do the right thing if you vote for it.

You may never know the children you are protecting from harm, but rest assured, If you vote for this bill you are saving the lives and preventing the suffering of many of Connecticut's children.

Respectfully,

Jerry Silbert, M.D.