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Empowering Communities. Advocating Solutions.

**Testimony CGA Children's Committee
Testimony by Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Louis W. Burch, Program Coordinator**

**March 6, 2014
Hartford, CT**

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, distinguished members of the CGA Children's Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Louis Burch, program coordinator for Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE). Supported by over 80,000 members in Connecticut and New York State, CCE works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment. CCE would like to offer the following testimony:

SB 46- AAC Pesticides on School Grounds (SUPPORTIVE)

CCE strongly supports this legislation, and applauds the Children's Committee for its efforts to prohibit the use of dangerous chemical pesticides on all school grounds in Connecticut. It is well documented that exposure to pesticides increases a child's risk of developing a range of neurological, respiratory and endocrine disorders. Long-term exposure to pesticides has also been linked to a variety of cancers, including non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Connecticut established itself as a nationwide leader on this critical issue, by passing a prohibition on the use of dangerous aesthetic pesticides on elementary school playing fields in 2005.

The K-6 pesticide ban was expanded in 2007 to include middle schools, and again in 2009 to include day care facilities. The gradual expansion of this policy demonstrates a growing body of knowledge among the health sciences community and the CT General Assembly around this serious children's health issue. Since these laws have been implemented, several communities throughout the state have successfully eliminated the use of toxic pesticides, on school playing fields, and a number have gone above and beyond what is prescribed by the law by prohibiting toxic pesticides on all green spaces and playing fields.

While the ban on pesticides for K-8 schools was an important first step, it fails to protect students in grades 9-12, who are still susceptible to the deleterious effects from exposure to toxics and carcinogens. In fact, high school students may have a greater level of exposure to pesticides, especially if they are involved in outdoor sports activities. Football, baseball, soccer and other field sports usually require young athletes to attend practice as many as six days per week,

exposing students to toxic pesticides for hours each day. Heavy physical activities such as sports and exercise lead to heavy breathing, which can also increase a young person's risk of inhaling toxic pesticides.

Effective and affordable alternatives to pesticides do exist and are widely available. There is clear science showing that pests and weeds can not only be managed successfully with readily available and affordable non-toxic alternatives, but that schools and school districts that eliminate the use of chemical pesticides can also benefit from long-term financial savings. This is the case in over 100 school districts in New York State, where groundskeepers have taken the necessary steps to learn and implement natural turf-care practices on all school grounds without the use of toxic pesticides. **Citizens Campaign for the Environment strongly supports expanding the existing K-8 pesticide ban on school green spaces to all playing fields in Connecticut for grades 12 and under, and respectfully urges this committee to pass this important legislation as soon as possible.**

HB 5035- AAC Toxic Fire Retardants in Children's Products (SUPPORTIVE)

Triphosphates are a type of chlorinated organophosphorus compound used as flame retardants in common household products. These chemicals have been found in almost all treated wastewater and are common emerging contaminants according to a 2002 USGS study analyzing 139 streams across the U.S. Over time, products containing these chemicals release the TCDPP, TCEP, or TCPP toxins, which attach to dust particles in the air. All three of these Tris chemicals are possible carcinogens and pose a public health risk, particularly to fetuses and small children.

The triphosphate family of chemicals are considered chemicals of high concern due to their potential for long-range transport, persistence, toxicity, and human exposure, and Connecticut should act quickly to prohibit these dangerous chemicals from children's products. **Citizens Campaign for the Environment strongly supports HB 5035 and respectfully recommends this committee amend this bill to include a definition of 'children's products' that protect all children under twelve.**

HB 5354- AAC Chemicals of High Concern to Children (SUPPORTIVE)

Children's products can contain any variety of over 80,000 chemicals, many of which are not thoroughly researched and/or regulated. Currently, toxic chemicals are used in the production of toys, bedding, and baby clothes. Children are especially vulnerable to the deleterious effects of toxic chemicals due to their small size and developing bodies, their proximity to the ground, and their tendency to engage in frequent hand-to-mouth behaviors.

The growing body of peer reviewed scientific evidence indicates a strong link between exposure to toxic chemicals in consumer products with the dramatic rise in developmental and neurological disorders we have seen in recent decades, including Autism spectrum disorders and ADHD. Research also shows significant links between toxic-chemical exposure, beginning in the womb, and a variety of cancers, including brain cancer and leukemia. **This has led to a growing consensus among the science and health communities that exposure to toxic chemicals is detrimental to the health and development of young children, and should be avoided wherever possible.**

House Bill 5354 is an important part of the overarching strategy to reduce children's exposure to toxic chemicals in the home environment. By requiring the Commissioner of Public Health to work in collaboration with the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection and

Commissioner of Consumer protection, to compile a priority list of chemicals of high concern to children based on toxicity, this legislation will help develop a framework for identifying and eliminating dangerous chemical exposures before they happen. The to revise the list every 2 years and make recommendations to the legislature will ensure that institutional knowledge about dangerous toxins remains up-to-date, as new products and new chemicals of concern emerge. Connecticut based businesses that use toxic chemicals will be encouraged to work in close collaboration with the *Chemical Innovations Institute* to find safe, non-toxic alternatives, which will advance green chemistry innovation and create jobs in our state.

CCE strongly believes that parents have a right to know what kinds of chemicals are in the products they choose for their children. This legislation will improve families' abilities to make educated decisions about which children's products are safe, while incentivizing manufacturers to seek out new, non-toxic alternatives for the products that they sell. **CCE is strongly supportive of HB 5354, and respectfully urges this committee to protect children's health by passing this legislation out of committee as soon as possible.**

On behalf of our members in Connecticut, we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and look forward to working with you on this important issue.