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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Children's Committee
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Testimony In Favor of
SB 46 AAC Pesticides On School Grounds

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

This bill extends the 8 year old pesticide ban on school grounds from K-8 schools to K-12 schools. Let's ask just a few questions to help us keep our priorities about turf pesticides in proper order:

What are pesticides? They are chemicals intentionally created for the express purpose of killing living things. Small insects will die immediately. Humans may not show negative reactions for decades after exposure.

What illnesses have been linked to chemicals found in pesticides? Asthma, cancer, damage to the liver, kidney, endocrine system, nervous system

Why worry about children? Science tells us that young, growing bodies are the most sensitive to toxics. High school students are still growing, and still deserving of our protection.

Are turf pesticides really necessary? No. We have documented case studies showing how modern organic methods work just as well when a transition period is considered. Organic turf is fully useable, even on high school athletic fields.

Are pesticides cheaper? No. Those case studies also show that modern organic methods are no more expensive than toxic pesticides to achieve similar results.

Does EPA registration mean safe? No, the agency does no testing, and registration does not imply safety.

What about an emergency infestation? The bill provides for appropriate pesticide use if necessary.

Would Connecticut be the first state with a K-12 ban? No. New York state has one in place already.

So why do we still use toxic pesticides? Because we are the Land Of Steady Habits. Long established practices persist, despite bountiful evidence they no long serve us well.

How do we move to better methods? Training courses for turf managers are readily available, some at no charge.

I have made 3 minutes of summary claims here. Can I back them up with evidence? Yes, definitely.

Connecticut has followed a progression in recent years working to protect its citizens from unnecessary exposure to toxic substances. We have a ways to go. This bill is simply the next step in the campaign to keep us safe from toxic pesticides.