



Connecticut Environmental Council

Written Testimony
Erica Fearn, Executive Director
Opposition to House Bill 5330

An Act Concerning the Application of Pesticides at Parks, Playgrounds, Athletic Fields and Municipal Greens
Friday, March 14, 2014
Public Health Committee

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and the distinguished member of the Public Health Committee, my name is Erica Fearn, I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Environmental Council (CTEC). I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in opposition to House Bill 5330, An Act Concerning the Application of Pesticides at Parks, Playgrounds, Athletic Fields and Municipal Greens.

CTEC is a membership organization representing associations and professionals. Our membership includes the Connecticut Groundskeepers Association, the Connecticut Tree Protective Association, the Connecticut Pest Control Association, the Connecticut Irrigation Contractors Association, and the Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents.

During the 2005 session, CTEC supported legislation that permitted pest controls to be applied to public and private schools 8th grade or under if the applications adhered to an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan. In addition, the schools IPM plan must be consistent with DEEP's Model Pest Control Management Plan. From January 1, 2006 until the July 1, 2010 sunset, school grounds were well maintained using the best management practices of IPM.

State law defines IPM as "the judicious use of pesticides to maintain a pest population at or below an acceptable level, while decreasing the use of pesticides." As a result of IPM's judicious methods of applying lawn care pesticides, over the four years of the pilot program tons of active ingredients were withheld from use on school grounds. During the pilot, the IPM approach was proven to be safe, reliable and an effective way of applying lawn care pesticides, while protecting the financial investment towns have made in athletic fields and school grounds.

Since the July 1, 2010 sunset athletic fields and school grounds have fallen into disrepair with pest populations growing out of control making athletic fields unplayable due to hard and uneven playing surfaces and infestations of insects, both stinging and turf damaging. Healthy turf creates a cushion preventing injury to children playing on the surface. Attached to my testimony are two pictures of a middle school baseball field in West Haven. Under the IPM pilot program this athletic field was well maintained and provided a safe playing surface for many different teams during the year. The second picture was taken just 12 months after the ban. This field is unplayable and not safe for students to use. As a result, students from this school are now playing their games on a park and recreations field, which is not subject to the ban. Unfortunately this example is being repeated in many towns in the state.

The ban has left our members; the licensed, educated professionals that take care of school grounds without the proper tools to maintain healthy playing surfaces for our children. Instead we are left with untested and unregulated chemicals lacking sound science - a true disservice to our children and their safety. This legislation would create the same, and even more hazards by not allowing control of pests and further letting invasive species of pests invade and affect the ability to fully utilize and enjoy our municipal lands.

CTEC, as well as over twenty municipal organizations responsible for the care of school grounds, recommend a balanced science based approach to ensure that our communities have safe and pest free parks, playgrounds, athletic fields and municipal greens. The current Kto8 ban simply does not work and certainly should not be expanded to include high schools and other municipal fields. We respectfully request that you not move forward with this proposal.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with this testimony.



Connecticut Environmental Council

Harry M. Bailey Middle School, West Haven, CT
Before the Ban on Pesticides



After the Ban on Pesticides - July 2011

