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FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



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Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill No. 68
Testimony by Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Louis W. Burch, Program Coordinator

February 19, 2014
Hartford, CT

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, distinguished members of the Environment 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 offers the following testimony regarding Senate Bill No. 68:

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 has 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, school districts and daycare facilities throughout the state have successfully eliminated the use of toxic pesticides, while cost-effectively managing pest problems on school grounds.

SB 68 is intended to strengthen the State's policy regarding pesticide use on K-8 playing fields by allowing groundskeepers to use microbial and biochemical products as part of their daily turf care regiment. Biochemical agents such as milky spore and pheromone traps are safe, natural approaches to dealing with grubs and other insects. If grubs and insects are not dealt with, over time they can deteriorate grass fields and make them unsuitable for use in sports and other recreational activities.

While CCE supports the intent of the proposed legislation to allow safe, non-toxic products for grubs and insect control, **CCE strongly recommends amendments to the clause regarding grub control products that have no caution, warning, or danger label.** As currently written, this language would allow for the use of a pesticide called *Acelepryn* (Chlorantraniliprole). Acelepryn has a half-life of over 1,000 days and is known to have the potential to contaminate groundwater. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has designated Acelepryn as a restricted pesticide, and the product is explicitly prohibited under the NYS Child-Safe Playing Fields Act. **CCE strongly supports amending this clause to expressly prohibit dangerous chemicals such as Acelepryn before passing SB 68 out of this committee.**

The perceived inability of certain school districts to deal with these pests in a safe, natural way has led some communities to push for the abolishment of these important children's health protections. It is critical that the CT General Assembly take action to uphold and strengthen existing state law, especially when those policies are designed to protect children's health. SB 68 would give school and municipal groundskeepers a more options to care for school green spaces and playing fields in a safe, non-toxic way, while solidifying Connecticut's commitment to protecting children's health from the deleterious effects of exposure to chemical pesticides. However, when expanding the pest control options of groundskeepers, we must ensure that approved products do not adversely impact public health and the environment.

CCE respectfully urges the Environment committee to first amend SB 68 to address the Acelepryn issue before advancing this critical legislation out of committee.

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.

Respectfully Submitted,

Louis W. Burch
Program Coordinator