

To the Chair and Members of the Environment Committee: March 17, 2014

I support SB 433 to protect our children and families on school and other public grounds specified in the bill. There is no reasonable rationale to expose CT families and residents to increased contact with toxic pesticides spread over the ground, harming our soils, contaminating our foods, and running into our water supplies.

Toxic pesticides such as glyphosate are increasingly found at higher levels in water samples associated with the expanded plantings of genetically engineered crops and resultant super-weeds. Of great concern is the potential of more toxic chemicals being spread if new Genetically Engineered (GE) Kentucky Bluegrass isn't banned from entering our state. Many treated GE bluegrass lawns would likely be located near or over well water supplies. Just to think about the consequences of increased chemical runoff from lawns abutting lakes, streams, and upslope from wells makes me shudder. How will neighbors know if their private well water supply could become the recipient of another person's application of toxic pesticides, except by suffering health problems and perhaps worse. And then, potentially being stung by uncertainties and costs associated with subsequent health consequences! Indeed, a deadly disaster in the making.

Sitting and playing in the grass is supposed to be enjoyable, not a toxic experience with risks to our health. If we allow chemical applications to continue to increase on our lawns and public places, we will ultimately be creating more harm to everything that comes into contact with the chemicals (via direct contact, airborne spray, or runoff into state and private waters). It would be imprudent to allow more poison exposure - just reading the pesticide label warnings is bad enough. The public would likely be in the dark about harmful pesticide runoff harms to their private well water from neighboring upslope chemical applications, especially when federal agencies are turning a blind eye to these pesticide health risks by not restricting the new GMO perennial grasses.

Beyond drinking water harms, there is also serious concern about more pesticide impacts on our soils (including backyard vegetable gardens!) from more expansive chemical and genetically engineered plantings. Examples include direct harms to soil organisms, the lack of organic matter building in the soil to nourish and protect plants from drought, and soil compaction into more hardpan soils, which would increase runoff instead of absorption into the ground.

In closing, please restrict the spigot of toxic harms to CT youth and families from existing pesticides and act to stop those associated with new perennial genetically engineered grasses and plants. It is more prudent to BAN new genetically engineered perennial plants now. I implore the Committee and legislators to please follow the Precautionary Principle to protect the public, especially our children who are most vulnerable to release of these dangerous toxins. CT can and must be a leader on this issue.

Thank you,

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