

Dear Members of the Environment Committee,

I am writing to you to express my concerns regarding S.B. No. 443 An Act Concerning Pesticides on School Grounds, Parks, Playground, Athletic Fields and Municipal Greens.

As a parent, I have watched our field conditions deteriorate dramatically here in East Haddam/Moodus since the pesticide ban was imposed. We need to find a balance between responsible use of pesticides and providing a safe environment for our kids to play. Without the use of pesticides and grub control in limited/responsible quantities our high school fields will turn into dirt/gravel pits like the ones at our elementary and middle school. The athletic fields at Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School are virtually unusable...and the ones at the East Haddam Elementary School are not far behind. Our kids are tripping over mounds of weeds, balls are bouncing haphazardly off these same weeds and our kids are falling on dirt versus a forgiving surface of grass. Ticks are in abundance and the uncontrolled clover and dandelions are drawing more bees. So much so, that an Arbor Day celebration at our elementary school was limited to the paved basketball court to protect attendees from getting bit/stung!

As an athletic trainer, the deteriorating field conditions concern me. Poor athletic field conditions lead to increased risk of abrasions/lacerations, concussions, facial/dental injuries, sprains and strains due to the various divots caused by skunks digging up grubs as well as the overgrowth of weeds in baseball/softball infields. The abundance of ticks and bees pose a potential increased risk in the transmission of Lyme Disease and allergic reactions to bee stings.

While I understand that this law was developed and passed with the best intentions, I don't think the ramifications of such laws were thought through. The organic methods suggested to treat our fields are not financially feasible nor have they been found to be effective. East Haddam has had the UCONN agricultural group, local horticultural groups and several land scape companies look at our fields. Despite spending thousands of dollars following their various recommendations, our fields are still an embarrassment to our community and a danger to our kids.

There is nothing more important than the health and safety of the children of our community, but I believe there are products on the market today that are vetted and could be used to help improve the quality of our grounds while maintaining the safety of our kids. We need to ensure that our kids continue to have safe, green spaces to play on and this law is not the answer. I hope you can assist in ensuring that the proposed extension of the current pesticide ban to all municipal property *does not pass*.

Sincerely,

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