

PHILIP W. GRANDE, JR.

March 2, 2015

Testimony in opposition of SB 366 – Environment Committee

Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis and members of the Environment Committee, my name is Phil Grande. I reside in Orange and operate several family owned LLCs from my facility in West Haven. My wholesale garden center and my landscaping company are both DEEP registered companies. In addition, the supply yard operates a DEEP registered recycling facility for organic yard waste. I represent the greenest of green jobs. The regulations you are considering will adversely affect my community as well as the many jobs that I provide.

For years, my industry has supported the rational, reasonable and legal approach to pesticide use at our schools and other municipal facilities. As the parent of two daughters age 14 and 16 I want to see our green areas maintained in a safe responsible manner. I have advocated for the continued use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies instead of outright bans. Each time this issue comes up for discussion or hearings, green industry professionals are asked to compromise. Yet, past concessions are never recalled. It seems that compromise now means industry moving closer to a ban with each passing legislative session. Our industry continues to rely on regulators at the DEEP as well as our scientific community at the University of Connecticut as well as the Agricultural Experiment station for IPM strategies and the judicious use of pesticides. We use organic methods when applicable, but need some of the conventional lawn care tools available to us as well.

The practical reality is that the existing ban has put some of our local fields out of play. In economically distressed communities, like West Haven, where my businesses operate, some fields are not safe enough for regular use. These towns don't have the budget flexibility of hundreds of thousands of dollars in order to completely renovate or replace them. As a former board of education member, I know that it will be difficult for school districts to bond for fields that will not be able to be maintained properly because of current laws. The citizens are not in a position to absorb the added expenses which would be incurred. Further, when the municipalities

or the youth leagues want someone like me to improve conditions or remove hazardous weeds like poison ivy on a school fence line, we are hamstrung. There is nothing that can be done by a licensed professional or town worker. Surely the State of Connecticut cannot continue to finance the replacement of fields. Putting more acreage under similar restriction will cause facilities to deteriorate prematurely and add costs to already stretched budgets.

Your opposition of SB 366 will help to ensure that my children and others will continue to have safely managed healthy landscapes and turf to play on and enjoy. I appreciate your time and consideration and am available to answer any questions you may have concerning this legislation or other related bills.

Cordially,

Phil Grande
987 Orange Center Road
Orange, CT 06477
203-996-4901