



**Testimony of Greening our Children  
before the Connecticut General Assembly Children's Committee  
March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015**

RE: HB 6897 An Act Concerning the Application of Pesticides at State-Operated Parks, Athletic Fields and Playgrounds.

Distinguished members of the Children's Committee, Greening our Children (GOC) represents approximately 900 families in Southeastern CT who thank you for this opportunity to provide **testimony in support of HB 6897**. If passed, this Act would protect children from exposure to toxic lawn pesticides by restricting the application of such pesticides on state-operated parks, athletic fields and playgrounds. The legislation would help ensure that children in CT have a better chance of growing up healthy by mitigating their exposure to pesticides early in life. GOC is a community of families that strive to minimize children's exposure to harmful chemicals as they mature from infancy to young adulthood. We refrain from using pesticides on our own lawns and have learned from this experience that pesticides are not needed to maintain healthy, vibrant lawns. In fact, the absence of pesticides enhances the health of grass and makes it more resistant to attack from grubs and other pests. We believe that children should be able to play outdoors without putting themselves at greater risk for chronic disease.

GOC is a community that relies on sound scientific studies to inform our views. Studies of pesticides and their effects on children of all ages have shown that even low-dose exposures can impair children's development and cause significant neurological damage. Children's brains and nervous systems, as well as other organs are continually developing from infancy through the late teen years. Every stage in development is critical as cells reproduce prodigiously. Mutations of cells during any of these developmental stages can have profound effects on a person's health once they become adults. So even if damage or disease does not present during childhood, cellular damage caused early in life can be the source of diseases such as cancer that manifest later in life.



Studies also show that children and adolescents generally have more exposure to pesticides than adults. This is probably due to the fact that children and teens spend more time playing outdoors and coming into contact with leaves and plantings that have been sprayed, playing organized sports on grass fields and generally absorbing pesticides through inhalation and contact with grass and surrounding surfaces. The dangers of pesticide exposure for children and teens should not be underestimated. The American Academy of Pediatrics issued a statement that “childhood exposure to pesticides is associated with pediatric cancers, decreased cognitive function and behavioral problems.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, exposure to pesticides has been linked to ADHD, since children with higher levels of pesticide metabolites are more likely to have a diagnosis of ADHD.<sup>2</sup>

While it could take decades to conclusively prove that pesticides cause certain diseases in our children, there is more than adequate proof already that these are dangerous substances that harm children, even in small doses. There is no compelling reason to continue to subject children to substances that are known neurotoxins. Safer (and less expensive) methods of lawn care exist and will achieve the dual objectives of 1) maintaining healthy playing fields while also 2) ensuring the health of the children that play on them. As parents, we urge the Children’s Committee to support this common-sense bill that would promote the health of parks and the people who use them.

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<sup>1</sup> “AAP Makes Recommendations to Reduce Children’s Exposure to Pesticides, 11/26/2012, <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/AAP-Makes-Recommendations-to-Reduce-Children's-Exposure-to-Pesticides.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> “Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Urinary Metabolites of Organophosphate Pesticides, Pediatrics, February 23, 2010, <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2010/05/17/peds.2009-3058.abstract>