



## CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, INC.

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March 10, 2015

### Testimony Regarding:

**S.B. No. 366 (COMM) AN ACT EXTENDING THE BAN ON THE USE OF LAWN CARE PESTICIDES TO SCHOOLS THAT HOUSE GRADES NINE TO TWELVE, INCLUSIVE, AND TO STATE FACILITIES.**

**S.B. No. 1063 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF PESTICIDES ON SCHOOL GROUNDS AND CERTAIN PUBLIC SPACES, AUTHORIZING THE USE OF CERTAIN MICROBIALS AND REESTABLISHING THE PESTICIDE ADVISORY COUNCIL.**

Good afternoon Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, Senator Moore, Representative Arconti and the distinguished members of the Children Committee . My name is Fred Balsamo, Executive Director for the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD), which represents the athletic directors in 188 high schools and 150 middle school athletic programs across the state.

Once again we are submitting testimony requesting that no further restrictions be placed on pesticide use on athletic fields and that the guidelines be developed that allows each individual town and school district to use these products responsibly via the Integrated Pest Management Program.

We can all agree that the environment is a major concern to all of us. However, CAAD's primary concern is in student safety and legislation of this type can have an adverse effect on the increase of injuries to our athletes, including concussions. Members of our organization have reported to us that as a result of the current K-8 ban schools have lost the use of their fields or they have become dangerously compacted. Most high school fields require extensive use in order to implement a comprehensive athletic program. Prudent use of chemical treatments is necessary to allow maximum usage of those fields.

There have been several notable studies conducted as it relates to injuries caused by poor field conditions. We have contacted an independent field testing lab, Sports Labs USA, which is contracted to evaluate the safety of all 31 NFL fields (see attached) and they write– ***“In regard to natural grass fields: it is our opinion that the inherent safety and ability to prevent injury associated with these fields is directly related to the blade-density of the grass and the ability to properly maintain that density. It is also our opinion that it is not possible to maintain the density and growth, required for safe play, nor adequately defend the natural growth process against the impact of frequent athletic events, without employing significant chemical treatments and/or enhancements.”***

Furthermore, in a 2011 University of Iowa Study<sup>1</sup> it is stated – ***“Field hardness increased the incidence of lower extremity injuries in football”*** and a Study Penn State<sup>2</sup> conducted in 1981 ***“ 20% of Injuries reported and treated for football could have been avoided if the fields were softer, better cared for and had less***

***compacted soil” and also at Penn State in 2004 – 10% of concussions were caused by a head hitting the surface of the field.”***

Additionally, since the July 1, 2010 K-8 ban, schools have reported having problems with grub and tick populations, poison ivy taking over fence lines, planting beds and boundary areas as well as poor compacted athletic fields just to name a few of the problems. All of these issues present a hazard to students because the ban does not allow any EPA registered pest controls to be used. This legislation would devastate high school athletic programs and contribute to the increase of injuries.

Sincerely,

*Fred Balsamo*

Fred Balsamo, CMAA, Executive Director  
Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors

<sup>1</sup>Iacovelli, Jaclyn Nicole. "Effect of field condition and shoe type on lower extremity injuries in American football." master's Master's thesis, University of Iowa, 2011. <http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/1148>.

<sup>2</sup>J.C. Harper, C.A. Moorehouse, D.V. Waddington, and W.E. Buckley, **Turf Management, Athletic-fieldConditions, and Injuries in High SchoolFootball**, Pennsylvania State University , 2010 -Reprintedfrom The Turf Line News, Vol. 120, No.2, pp. 28 - 33, 1994J- <http://archive.lib.msu.edu/tic/stnew/article/1994sep6.pdf>



**sports labs usa**

*Sport Surfaces Testing & Consulting*

**January 23, 2014**

Whom It May Concern,

Our company, Sports Labs USA, provides certified testing services, including ASTM F-355, commonly referred to as G-Max. The G-Max test results predict the shock attenuating capacity of an athletic field and other related tests measure the response and performance characteristics of the surface system. The 'G-Max test' has become a priority focus with respect to sport fields because of the increased awareness of concussive injuries and recent publicity surrounding their frequency of occurrence. The shock attenuating capacity of a field directly relates to injuries that occur as a result of bodily impact on the surface; which is why all new synthetic fields should be tested and certified as to G-Max, *in-situ*, post-installation - before safe use can be allowed.

G-Max testing is, likewise, used extensively on natural grass fields to insure the safety of the participants. We are currently contracted with the National Football League (NFL) for testing and certification of all 31 NFL Stadium fields, including both synthetic and natural grass fields.

In regard to natural grass fields: it is our opinion that the inherent safety and ability to prevent injury associated with these fields is directly related to the blade-density of the grass and the ability to properly maintain that density. It is also our opinion that it is not possible to maintain the density and growth, required for safe play, nor adequately defend the natural growth process against the impact of frequent athletic events, without employing significant chemical treatments and/or enhancements.

Please feel free to contact this office if you any further questions or concerns.

Yours truly,

Joseph W. DiGeronimo, STC  
Principal