



Town of Glastonbury

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March 10, 2015

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

RE: Pesticide Legislation

Opposing SB00366 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.

Opposing SB01063 An Act Concerning the Application of Pesticides on School Grounds and Certain Public Spaces, Authorizing the Use of Certain Microbials and Re-establishing the Pesticide Advisory Council.

I am writing on behalf of the Town of Glastonbury in my capacity as Director of Parks & Recreation. My Department employs trained professionals that are responsible for the care and maintenance of public parks, school grounds and municipal properties. My testimony regarding proposed legislation follows. **Please also be advised that both the Connecticut Recreation and Park Association and Connecticut Park Association oppose the proposed legislation.**

Please accept this letter as an expression of opposition to SB00366 and SB01063 and their provisions. First, despite what well intentioned proponents of the ban will testify under oath, it is important to understand that the science of organic lawn care has NOT reached the point where it is a viable, practical alternative to the judicious use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and EPA approved lawn chemicals.

Existing State law already includes protections that are more than sufficient to protect the public and our environment in this regard. Public Act 99-165, approved June 23, 1999, includes the following requirements: (1) all applications are to be made by a State licensed pesticide applicator with supervisory certification under Section 22a-54; (2) school staff and parents/guardians of school children are provided with a written statement of the School Board's policy regarding pesticide applications each year; (3) staff and students may register for PRIOR notification of planned pesticide applications; (4) applications cannot be made during regular school hours or during planned activities; (5) records of all applications are maintained for a period of 5 years; and, MOST IMPORTANTLY, (6) all school systems are required to practice Integrated Pest Management consistent with the model plan developed by DEEP under Section 22a-661. This act also includes provisions that extend to child day care centers, group day care homes and family day care homes as defined by Section 19a-77 of the general statutes.

Use of Integrated Pest Management principles and practices dramatically reduce the use of pesticides. Cultural practices associated with growing a vigorous healthy stand of grass include proper mowing height, mowing frequency, watering, aeration, fertilization, maintaining PH balance, scouting and establishing thresholds that must be exceeded before pest treatment becomes actionable. Spot applications are the norm. The days of routine broadcast applications have been gone for years. The continued selective and judicious use of pesticides is needed and is only one tool required to maintain safe athletic fields for the public.

The provisions of both bills are unnecessarily onerous and will result in an immediate and severe decline in the quality of athletic fields across the state. Again, despite what others will testify, we have already seen a decline at fields located on school grounds in grades K-8 because of the existing ban. Please do not extend these problems to schools housing grades 9-12 and athletic fields in public parks. The incidence of accidents/injuries to athletes will surely increase.

If approved, the bill will also create an **UNFUNDED MANDATE** for all of Connecticut's 169 municipalities and 19 regional school districts. The cost of organic means, despite their ineffectiveness, is up to 5 times greater than established methods. The alternate means will result in a significant fiscal impact because the materials are more costly, they are more labor intensive to employ, and specialized equipment will need to be purchased. Most importantly, organic lawn care practices do not include all of the necessary tools needed to effectively maintain athletic turf.

I urge you to reject both bills. I also request that any fiscal impact report prepared by the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) include the cost of organic means and methods that will need to be used to replace the judicious use of EPA approved herbicides and pesticides currently permitted. **It is simply not accurate to report that there will be no fiscal impact to Connecticut's municipalities because pesticides will no longer be used.** If a fiscal note is requested from OFA, I am willing to serve as a resource to their staff, as would my colleagues from both the CT Park Association and CT Recreation and Park Association, in this regard.

Please feel free to contact me directly at (860) 652-7687 or ray.purtell@glastonbury-ct.gov. Thank you for your consideration.



Raymond E. Purtell
Director of Parks & Recreation
Town of Glastonbury