

Statement Regarding Committee Bill No. 76, LCO Number 5558

AN ACT AUTHORIZING MUNICIPALITIES TO RESTRICT THE USE OF PESTICIDES IN CERTAIN AREAS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OR ON CERTAIN TYPES OF PROPERTIES

I am writing on behalf of Protect Our Pollinators in support of Bill No. 76, authorizing municipalities to restrict the use of pesticides in certain areas of the municipality or on certain types of properties.

We know that:

- The population of bees, butterflies and other essential pollinators is in decline, due in large part to overuse of pesticides.
- A recent study shows that 40% of insect species are declining and a third are endangered. These insect species sustain life through pollination services and are an essential part of the food chain.
- Homeowners apply about 66 million pounds of herbicides and insecticides each year to their homes, lawns and gardens . . . not including chemicals applied by lawn and pest-control companies.
- In the U S., commonly used pesticides are routinely found in surface and ground water supplies.
- Pesticide studies have found traces of garden chemicals in children, with the highest concentrations reported in children from homes with pesticide-treated lawns and gardens
- Although Connecticut has regulated the sale of most neonicotinoids to the public, lawn care professionals can still apply these soluble pesticides to lawns where they can leach into water supplies and surface water resources.
- Many toxic organophosphate pesticides as well as permethrins and other toxic chemicals are still available for public use.
- Studies show that pesticide exposure can adversely affect neurological, respiratory, immune and endocrine systems in humans, even at low levels. Children are especially sensitive to pesticide exposure.
- 7 million birds are killed each year from the use of lawn pesticides.
- The use of pesticides is ever increasing.

We also know that:

- Federal agencies in the last two years have rolled back many essential regulations which were designed to protect the environment and human health.
- Alternative methods to pest control do exist.

Therefore:

- It is time to reassess the role of state and local regulatory entities in promoting sustainable land management practices.
- Giving local officials the flexibility to manage certain high risk and/or sensitive areas in their towns makes sense.

Areas that might be regulated:

- Lakes or ponds within a town: Regulations regarding lawn chemicals and fertilizers could help to maintain clean water and slow down eutrophication processes.
- Watersheds along rivers and streams could benefit from pesticide-free zones, protecting water quality and aquatic species.
- Inland wetland regulations could be enhanced to protect the functionality of wetlands and the species they support.
- Pesticide-free buffers could be established near areas where children regularly gather.
- Towns that border Long Island Sound could establish protective measures to benefit the Sound and the wildlife and aquatic species it supports. Additionally, this could enhance recreation and property values along the shore.

For the above reasons, we fully support Committee Bill 76 and hope that the legislature will enact these measures.

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