



Pesticide, Herbicide Ban Makes Field Maintenance Challenging

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WALLINGFORD — Whenever Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Marc Deptula walks the grounds at the town's elementary and middle schools, he usually finds overgrown infields.

“When I see an infield overgrown, I get really upset,” Deptula said. “We’re working with our Parks and Rec Department to try and make these fields better because they want to use (the fields) more.”

At Moran Middle School a person can see how overgrown the fields are from the street, Deptula said. To address the problem, Deptula and his staff resort to manual labor. They use a special kind of rake to remove the weeds

Weeds, especially around fences, can also pose a problem for the Deptula and his staff because they cannot use herbicides. Instead, they use weed trimmers and pull the weeds by hand.

Public Act 99-165 says the use of pesticides on elementary school grounds or preschools, whether public or private, could only be done within an integrated pest management program approved by what is now the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. In 2007, the law was expanded to apply to all school properties through eighth grade.

Individuals have been trying to overturn the ban or finding middle ground, according to Marshall Collins, counsel for the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association,

Connecticut Association of Schools and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference.

Collins, as well as representatives from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and numerous municipalities, met with DEEP Deputy Commissioner Macky McCleary on Tuesday regarding pesticides and integrated pest management programs.

McCleary recently held a listening tour with municipal officials to hear concerns about the ban on pesticide and herbicide usage. Collins said a presentation McCleary made leads him to believe the deputy commissioner will try to expand the ban to high school fields.

“From my understanding of his presentation, he wants to expand the ban to high school fields and possibly other areas,” Collins said. “He also wants to build in some flexibilities and address some products and what to do with the invasive (species).”

The integrated pest management program details how the maintenance supervisor plans to maintain school fields and facilities. The plans focus on studying pests, examining for pest presence and prevention.

Public Act 09-56 bans lawn care pesticide applications on the grounds of day care centers, elementary and middle schools. The law went into affect on Oct. 1, 2009, for day care facilities and July 1, 2010, for schools.

Because of the law, school systems can only use products that are already approved by DEEP and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Some schools, however, have resorted to not using anything to maintain the fields. Wallingford is one of those school systems because Deptula feels none of the products offered are safe and approved, he said.

“It was implemented with no plans on how to deal with things like infields because the infields on all these elementary and middle school fields all grow in on the off-season,” Deptula said. “Most towns don’t have the personnel to maintain those manually without the help of herbicides.”

“We do it, but during the off-season, it becomes a nightmare. It takes quite a long time.”

Opponents of an integrated pest management program believe the pesticides and herbicides are harmful. Deptula reflected on a time when he asked what he could do about poison ivy and he was surprised by what they said.

“At one time, the response I got from DEEP about poison ivy was to educate people to stay away from it and to leave it or to remove it manually,” he said.

Those who support overturning the ban believe not using pesticides can still create a harmful environment for students.

Historically, the school fields in Meriden have been in bad condition, according to David Paul, director of facilities for the city school system. A major factor for this, Paul said, is because the organic products “just don’t work and whatever does remotely work is so expensive it’s not conducive to our budgets.” Like Wallingford, he and his staff have to resort to manual labor to deal with the fields.

The deteriorating field conditions “really creates a hard-pan process versus having a nice, lush 3-inches of turf, where there’s a cushion there to prevent injuries from falls,” said Paul, who added that Meriden has been losing 20 percent of its school fields to grub damage per year.

William McMinn, facilities director for Madison schools, testified in 2012 and described the town’s situation after deciding to use a non-toxic pest management program. Madison banned pesticides on town fields and school grounds before the law was passed. Within 18 months, McMinn said, “we had a substantial change in the turf thickness on the athletic fields and weeds were out of control around the buildings and landscape beds.”

McMinn added that after the law was passed, Madison bought over \$40,000 worth of equipment and hired more personnel to pull weeds. Investing in an organic program — with no pesticides or herbicides — was significantly more expensive than an integrated pest management program, he said in his testimony.

Several agencies support the use of an integrated pest management program. The federal EPA “recommends that schools use integrated pest management to reduce pesticide risk and exposure to children.”

“Put simply, IPM is a safer, and usually less costly option for effective pest management in a school community,” according to the website.

Paul said he would support overturning the ban and he has been working with Meriden School Superintendent Mark D. Benigni, who also wants the pesticide ban lifted.

“We went from zero to 100 and banned all pesticides — it was an irresponsible move,” Paul explained. “... Some of the things we’ve been experiencing are clovers and dandelions. We’ve been attracting a bee harvest. If kids are playing on that field, what if a child was stung and they were allergic?”

“It’s created a host of problems that weren’t really thought out properly.”

Deptula acknowledged the benefits of using pesticides and herbicides, but he said he was uncertain if he supported a overturn of the present ban. Before the law went into effect, Deptula said, schools commonly used bleach and other chemicals to clean and sanitize. As time went on, he said, he realized how it led to a more toxic environment.

Collins said it’s “been incredibly difficult over the years” to find middle ground.

“People on the other side of this issue don’t want a middle ground on this,” he explained. “They want a ban, period. How do you get around that?”

“To expand the ban to high school fields would be a mistake. What should be mandated is effective regulations for all fields — we agree with that, but that doesn’t mean a ban on synthetics.”

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NORAHG RESPONSE

NO ONE WANTS THIS #@!!% BAN NONSENSE !

No one in Wallingford wants DANGEROUS PEST-INFESTED GARBAGE DUMPS ! It is IMPOSSIBLE for home-owners or maintenance professionals to keep their properties beautiful by using so-called green alternative pesticides and practices. Without conventional pest control products, playing surfaces become THIN AND YELLOW, and OVER-RUN WITH WEEDS and DESTROYED BY INSECTS, resulting in the DISMAL ANNIHILATION OF SAFE TURF PLAYING SURFACES and turning them into DANGEROUS PEST-INFESTED GARBAGE DUMPS. <http://wp.me/P1jq40-44g> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-4z3> WHO WANTS TO LIVE IN #@!!% PEST-INFESTED GARBAGE DUMPS just because a small group of activists seek to impose needless pesticide bans ?!?! Can municipalities and home-owners afford THE HARDSHIP AND COST OF THIS #@!!% PESTICIDE BAN NONSENSE ?!?! NO ! Organic pesticide-free maintenance is promoted by enviro-vermin with UNVERIFIABLE SUCCESS STORIES ! Organic is a DISMAL FAILURE ! <http://wp.me/P1jq40-445> <http://wp.me/p1jq40-3yl> Anti-Pesticide Lunatics are PUSHING PROHIBITION WITHOUT ANY VALID ALTERNATIVES. Green Alternative Pesticides, as well as Organic Fertilizers, are often owned and distributed by the very same ENVIRO-VERMIN who CONSPIRE TO IMPOSE Anti-Pesticide PROHIBITION. The question of Anti-Pesticide PROHIBITION revolves less around health and environment concerns, and more around PRODUCTS AND SERVICES that are sold at STUNNINGLY EXORBITANT COSTS. When it comes to pesticide bans, municipal officials are thinking twice about banning pesticides by looking at the experience of those jurisdictions that have suffered the hardship and STUNNINGLY EXORBITANT COSTS of this #@!!% NONSENSE ! <http://wp.me/p1jq40-5x1> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-43V> In fact, there are REAL TRENDS AGAINST PESTICIDE BANS. The following jurisdictions STOPPED or RESCINDED or LIMITED or OPPOSED Anti-Pesticide PROHIBITION, or granted professional lawn care businesses with an EXCEPTION STATUS ... Alberta (Province),

Altona (Manitoba), Ashland (Oregon), Beaumont (Alberta), Belleville (Ontario), British Columbia (Province), Calgary (Alberta), Campbell River (British Columbia), Chicago (Illinois), Durango (Colorado), Edmonton (Alberta), Everett (Washington), Guelph (Ontario), Guelph-Eramosa (Ontario), Kamloops (British Columbia), Kelowna (British Columbia), Merritt (British Columbia), New Brunswick (Province), Newfoundland & Labrador (Province), Ogunquit (Maine), Port Alberni (British Columbia), Portage La Prairie (Manitoba), Quebec (Prohibition Invalidated When Lawsuit Defeated Ban), Regina (Saskatchewan), Rossland (British Columbia), Salmon Arm (British Columbia), Scarborough (Maine), Saint John's (Newfoundland & Labrador), Steinbach (Manitoba), Stuartburn (Manitoba), Vernon (British Columbia), Winkler (Manitoba).

<http://wp.me/P1jq40-1JO> THE TRENDS AGAINST PESTICIDE BANS CONTINUE. Wallingford should join the trend. NO ONE CAN AFFORD THIS #@!!% NONSENSE ! WILLIAM H. GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G

<http://pesticidetruths.com/> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-2rr>