

**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

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Representative Alice Hanlon Peisch  
24 Beacon Street, Room 473G  
Boston, MA 02133

April 18, 2019

Dear Representative Peisch,

On behalf of the Wellesley Natural Resources Commission and Board of Health, I write to ask your support of Bill H.776/S.477, *An Act Empowering Towns and Cities to Protect Residents and the Environment from Harmful Pesticides*.

To date, over 150 communities across the country have passed policies to restrict the use of pesticides in response to emerging evidence about potential human and environment impacts. The exact concerns differ by pesticide, but include links to cancer, developmental challenges, lower IQ, and delayed motor development. Many of these laws work to protect the most vulnerable among us, such as children, who take in more pesticides relative to their body weight than adults and have developing organ systems. Others focus on the safeguarding precious water resources, or the protection of wildlife like declining pollinator species critical to our environment and food supply.

Local governments have responded to the scientific evidence, their residents' concerns, and their area's unique ecological conditions through prudent measures to reduce exposure to hazardous pesticides. This includes actions such as creating a list of approved or prohibited pesticides, restricting toxic pesticide use around parks and playgrounds, negotiating commodity contracts and service agreements that prevent suppliers from offering products that contain pesticides harmful to pollinators, and keeping habitat along rights-of-way and other areas of management property free of pesticides harmful to pollinators. In states that have passed preemption laws, local governments must bend over backwards to pass local legislation that fits our community's needs. These restrictions keep us from doing our job as policymakers.

The Wellesley Natural Resources Commission has had a long-standing Organic Integrated Pest Management Plan for the Town's parkland. That policy was recently adopted by the Town's Selectmen and Library Trustees, and thus, all Town land is now free from routine application of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. The NRC has also engaged the public in multiple education campaigns outlining the dangers of pesticide use, and benefits of Eco-friendly landscaping. Despite these efforts, pesticide use on private property remains a pervasive problem in the community and endangers our public health.

While not every city has taken similar actions, we strongly support our right to do so, and believe our constituents. As local officials, we are highly attuned to the needs of our constituents and adept at calibrating our protections accordingly. Local governments are also nimbler than their state or federal counterparts and can quickly respond to emerging health hazards when federal protections may take years to achieve. We ask for your support of both Bill H.776/S.477.

For the Commission,

Brandon Schmitt,  
Director, Wellesley Natural Resources Commission