



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

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**Testimony to the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
On Behalf of the Wellesley Natural Resources Commission
In Support of Massachusetts H. 3927, An act empowering towns to protect their environment and
residents from harmful pesticides
October 17, 2017**

I'm here today on behalf of the Wellesley Natural Resources Commission in support of House Bill 3927, proposed by Representative Dylan Fernandes. The Wellesley Natural Resources Commission is a five-member elected board with broad responsibility for our town's conservation land, parks, and natural resources.

Ten years ago, we partnered with the Wellesley Board of Health and our School Committee to develop and implement an Organic Integrated Pest Management Policy that restricts the use and application of synthetic pesticides in parks and conservation areas and on land controlled by the Wellesley School District. Last year, this policy was expanded to include all municipal land in our town.

Our efforts to restrict the use of pesticides are motivated by our growing concern over the clear risks these toxic chemicals pose to children, the elderly, and other vulnerable residents, as well as to pollinators, wildlife, and the local environment.

But we've gone as far as we can go. As you know, existing law prevents us from proposing that our town adopt any further restrictions on pesticide application to private property. If approved, House Bill 3927 would allow us to put the question to our town – and that's all we want – the opportunity to make the case to our fellow residents that these dangerous chemicals do not belong in our community.

In the meantime, we've been working on public education. I've spent many hours at public events talking to residents about what they put on their lawns – and the fact is, most people don't know. And that's true whether they have a lawn service or care for their own lawn. They assume that if a product is sold at the hardware store or applied by their lawn service – it's safe for their children, their pets, and their neighbors. They expect the town to protect them from these dangerous toxins and are almost disbelieving when they learn that the residents of the town are prohibited from deciding this important issue for ourselves.

We urge you to allow the residents of communities throughout the Commonwealth to decide whether our families should continue to be exposed to toxic pesticides in our neighborhoods. Thank you very much for your time.

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Attachments: Testimony of Dr. Regina LaRocque
and Dr. Sarah Little