

**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

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December 14, 2021

To: Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture

Re: Testimony on “An Act empowering towns and cities to protect residents and the environment from harmful pesticides” H.Bill 910: Rep. Dylan Fernandes

Good afternoon Chairs Dykema, Rausch, and members of the Committee,

My name is Raina McManus, and I serve as chair of the Wellesley Natural Resources Commission, a five-member elected board with broad responsibility for our town’s conservation land, wetlands, parks, and environment. We also hold the statutory authority of Pest Control Officer for our town. I’m here to speak in support of House Bill 910, “*An act empowering towns and cities to protect residents and the environment from harmful pesticides,*” sponsored by Representative Dylan Fernandes

In 2007, a member of our community with health and science expertise worked with the Natural Resources Commission, Department of Public works, AND our Board of Health to develop an organic integrated pest management policy for our park and conservation lands, including our town’s athletic playing fields.

In 2017 that policy was extended to *all* municipal land in our town. The proof is in the results - our town hall green is *very* green, and our fields are healthy *and* playable. Parents, and people with pets, feel good about using our toxin-free lands. In fact, we hear over and over from our residents that they would like to reduce the use of these dangerous chemicals even further, which is what this Bill would allow.

Two years ago members of the Natural Resources Commission accompanied three six-graders to the State House to testify before this very Committee on behalf of House Bill 910. Two of those students will again submit written testimony to your Committee.

The provisions in this Bill provide a reasoned method to allow municipalities to decide for themselves how to regulate pesticides where it affects residents the most, where they live.

I respectfully urge you to move favorably on this bill which would reduce the amount of harmful toxins in our communities. The expertise, and will to do this, is out there. House Bill 910 establishes the process. Our residents, even the youngest among us, want an environment free of toxins. For all the reasons expressed here today, please act on this important legislation.

Thank you very much for your time today and for the opportunity to speak on this issue.

Raina C. McManus, Chair
Wellesley Natural Resources Commission