

**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

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October 17, 2017

Senator Anne Gobi  
Representative Smitty Pignatelli  
Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture

Re: **Massachusetts Bill H. 3927**, an act empowering towns to protect their environment and residents from harmful pesticides

Dear Senator Gobi and Representative Pignatelli:

I am writing in support of House Bill H. 3927, an act empowering towns to protect their environment and residents from harmful pesticides.

I am concerned about this topic as an academic physician-scientist, as well as in my elected capacity as a Natural Resources Commissioner for the Town of Wellesley.

Pesticides are a collective term for chemicals intended to kill unwanted insects, plants, molds, and rodents. Many of the chemicals used to kill pests also endanger human health, and children are uniquely vulnerable to toxic effects from pesticide exposure. Children encounter pesticides daily through home and public lawn application, household insecticide use, application to pets, and agricultural product residues in their diets.

The risks of acute pesticide poisoning are clear, and we now have an increased understanding of the health implications of chronic pesticide exposure. Many pesticide chemicals are classified by the US EPA as carcinogens. Epidemiologic evidence demonstrates associations between early life exposure to pesticides and pediatric cancers (including brain tumors and acute lymphocytic leukemia), decreased cognitive function, and behavioral problems.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that pediatricians work with government agencies to advocate for the least toxic methods of pest control and that communities set goals to reduce children's overall exposure to pesticides<sup>1</sup>.

Wellesley residents are concerned about pesticide use in our community; we wish to protect the health of our children and the health of the subsurface aquifer that provides our drinking water. As elected officials, we have responded to this concern by enacting an organic integrated pest management program on all Town property. However, we are limited in our ability to further restrict pesticide use on private land.

House Bill H. 3927 will allow Wellesley and other Massachusetts communities to act on the scientific recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics by enacting ordinances to protect children in their communities from the adverse effects of pesticide exposure. I encourage you to support this legislation for the health of Massachusetts' children.

Respectfully,

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<sup>1</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Environmental Health. Pesticide Exposure in Children. *Pediatrics*. 2012;130(12).