

Turfgrass Advocacy

2004



New York State Turfgrass Association • February 3, 2004

BACKGROUND

A.1110-c (Wright, et al.)/S.2095-b (Marcellino) would create within the Department of Environmental Conservation a 10-member State Urban Pesticide Board primarily to examine patterns of pesticide use in urban areas; research lower environmental impact methods of pest management; examine the illegal use and sale of pesticides; and make recommendations in a preliminary and final report to the Governor and state legislature.

NYSTA Perspective

The genesis of the bill stemmed from a news report on the illegal use and sale of pesticides in New York City. As professionally trained pesticide applicators, we share the public health concerns caused by this report and believe it is a serious enforcement problem that requires no further changes in existing law. Moreover, the scope of the bill goes far beyond the issue at hand and duplicates existing requirements and programs. The bill defines the term “urban” as any city or town with a population density greater than 1,000 persons per square mile. Thus, a pesticide use study of virtually every urban and suburban area in the state is included in the bill. Existing law already requires annual pesticide reporting across the state, and in fact, pesticide use is declining. A growing number of professional pesticide applicators subscribe to Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices, which consider and evaluate all possible chemical and non-chemical pest and weed control options. The New York State Integrated Pest Management Program, housed at Cornell University, recently received the Environmental Quality Award from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This is the highest award EPA bestows.

Furthermore, in this time of fiscal crisis and spending restraint, creating a new government entity is not a wise allocation of precious financial resources. While the bill sponsor memo does not indicate a fiscal impact to the state, there will be costs involved with reimbursing Board members for “actual and necessary” expenses and issuing two reports to the Governor and 212 members of the legislature.

In addition, in 2003, DEC shed 234 full time staff positions through attrition and early retirement. NYSTA prefers to see the DEC direct its limited financial and staff resources to expediting applicator licensing services and approvals, updating training manuals for certification and re-certification, and continuation of the development of Integrated Pest Management, through a legislative allocation of \$350,000 for the Community IPM Program in the budget. These current DEC responsibilities are vital to enabling professional pesticide applicators to conduct their business in a timely and educated manner, while developing and utilizing techniques that have a reduced reliance on pesticide use across the state.

Recommendations

- Oppose A.1110-c/S.2095-b.
- Support allocation of \$350,00 for continued funding of the Community IPM Program