Time to hop on board the P&N bandwagon

In a market as heavily regulated as the specialty pesticide industry, it's hard to blame companies for feeling a bit like Marge Schott at an NAACP convention in Panamint. With all sorts of environmental groups seeking to limit and sometimes eliminate the use of certain chemicals, manufacturers have naturally taken on something of a siege mentality. With regard to the growing number of states which have instituted mandatory posting and notification regulations, the industry stance against such measures has become counterproductive.

The stance of most chemical company executives is grounded in scientific research — namely, that existing and notification procedures are necessary. The exorbitant cost and considerable time spent gaining approval through the federal Environmental Protection Agency should be proof enough that approved chemicals are not harmful — thereby eliminating the need for post warnings on every boundary line.

Unfortunately, this stance (all too often fatal) is running against the tide of public opinion. Twenty-three states have already adopted posting and notification statutes, and more are sure to follow suit. Efforts to combat this trend (however malodorous and unfair it might be) will come back to haunt the game down the road. Better to push for a federal, nationwide posting and notification statute which would preempt the state and local regulations.

Why? Well, first of all, it's consistent with the industry stance on pre-emption with regard to banning certain chemicals. RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) has fought and won these battles, making it a natural choice to lead a national posting and notification crusade.

Second, the chemical industry is losing money in the coal stoves by conforming to the myriad posting and notification statutes across the country. Different signs, different time considerations, different boundary requirements. Wouldn't it be easier, and less expensive, if companies had one standard to which they adhered? Third and perhaps most important, chemical companies through their slight of hand and with industry leverage, would be able to avoid the real issue.

“Like a good parent, you are often there in the middle of the night when the water line breaks. And you certainly are there for all those early morning footsteps in. I'm sure I can speak for my fellow architects here and around the world: The game would not be the same without your love for golf, the playing conditions, and the experience of the fellowship the game provides for millions and millions of golfers through your great efforts.”

Most scaring statement: Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, a man who currently resides in Washington, D.C., spoke of pesticide runoffs from golf courses as being equivalent to that of agriculture. Please tell me our politicians aren't so uninformed in making legislation. Agh-hh!

Best attempt at reconciliation: Past GCSSA President John Segui of Wayneborough CC in Berwyn, Pa., gave the invocation at the annual banquet, calling for healing and brotherly love within the Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America “despite our differences.”

Best booth entertainment: Monsanto's master magician expertly, and with humor, weaved a soap pitch for Dimension and Roundup through his slight of hand and card tricks. Crowds gathered — always. Bright idea, PR folks. Encore.

Latest lines: Again, at the Precision Small Engine/Flymo booth. Two years running. Most traumatic design statement: PGA Tour pro and golf course designer Jerry Pate said a famous architect told him that when he designs a course that expects to host a televised event, he always looks back from the green toward the tee to make sure golf cart paths and other aspects of his design won't be too hot to handle. “It startled me,” Pate said. “I've always played, and looked at, a course from tee to green.”

Best comicalism: Without daily fees, wouldn't the funds "earned" do more than supplant the real estate and other taxes which would be paid by privately owned facilities? So, where's the benefit for the taxpayers? If private enterprise can't figure out how to earn a profit with a golf course in a given area, what makes government think it can? Could a public government have a tool private enterprise doesn't have — the general tax role? That's why they call it "tax-supported" golf courses, but the tax benefits are never told the true results. That's why so many government courses report a "profit." Ignored are the lost real estate and sales taxes, various administrative costs, and debt service hidden in the parks budget rather than being charged to the golf courses themselves.

If government doesn't own and operate bowling alleys, restaurants, barber shops, automobile dealers or manufacturers, etc., why does it insist on doing so with golf courses? Once the door is opened to bureaucratic manipulation of taxpayer funds, who knows what field will be next, in the name of the "public interest"? That has been the history of every socialistic country in the world.

In a nutshell, government never has, never can and never will run commercial enterprises efficiently and effectively. They will ALWAYS be used to buy votes through special treatment of some at the expense of others. Therefore, I have no respect for anyone who seeks to obtain taxpayer funding for golf courses. Architects, managers, professors or whomever.

And aren't so-called public/private partnerships a wonderful thing? Let's see now, the taxpayers take part of the risk, the golf course builder takes part of the through their slight of hand and card tricks. Crowds gathered — always. Bright idea, PR folks. Encore.

MARK LASKI, managing editor

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Letters

REMOVED GOVT PARTICIPATION

To the Editor:

I read with interest your editorial entitled "Daily Fee Facilities Deplete Level Playing Field (January 1993)" and, while you seem to attempt to serve your title line, the reasoning and conclusions seem to avoid the real issue.

What is that issue? Government has no business being in business of providing services, especially in competition with private enterprise. When issue are matters of risk/reward, special interests, tax exemption/avoidance, etc., that's socialism. Not at issue is the provision of recreational facilities to disadvantaged persons — a social reason — since golfers are among the most affluent people and government is merely using non-golfer funds to appear benevolent to golfers.

Let me ask a few questions: Even if government courses charged the same rates as area daily fees, wouldn't the funds "earned" do more than supplant the real estate and other taxes which would be paid by privately owned facilities? So, where's the benefit for the taxpayers? If private enterprise can't figure out how to earn a profit with a golf course in a given area, what makes government think it can? Could a public government have a tool private enterprise doesn't have — the general tax role? That's why they call it "tax-supported" golf courses, but the tax benefits are never told the true results. That's why so many government courses report a "profit." Ignored are the lost real estate and sales taxes, various administrative costs, and debt service hidden in the parks budget rather than being charged to the golf courses themselves.

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