To the editor:

In 1991, the town of Casey, Wis., made the word "pre-emption" very important to the green industry. State pre-emption of local pesticide legislation is an issue that affects the golf course industry more than many of us realize. Certainly that is the case here, in Iowa.

On Jan. 19, after a very long battle, the Iowa House of Representatives voted by nearly a two-thirds margin to accept a bill, Senate File 94, that allows state governments to place control of pesticide regulations, thereby making compliance to numerous laws a very difficult problem. Opposition to Senate File 94 tried to use the home rule argument, along with hysterical testimony on the evils of poisons, to place control of pesticide regulation in the hands of local officials. Many forces were joined here in Des Moines and throughout the state to help this bill pass through the Legislature. The Iowa Alliance of Golf Course Superintendents, an organization composed of the golf course and lawn care industries, lobbied hard in favor of golf course superintendents.

What interests of the environmentalist camp do not realize is that regulation will actually reduce the risk of pesticide abuse. By enacting tough laws which govern the entire state, we will be more assured that the pesticide training and application is carried out with authority and uniformity. As environmentalists, golf course superintendents realize the importance of making everyone adhere to the proper regulations of pesticide use. Why would we take away the right of the state to pass tougher legislation? If concerns are voiced from the state, it will allow local municipalities to set their own rules. One city may be tough, while another is more lenient, allowing many lawn care companies off the hook. Why make one city safer than another? Why not make the entire state safe?

By letting the state administer pesticide laws, we ensure consistency in the training of applicators. Lower governments currently do not have the trained staff or funds to judge the compliance of any new ordinance. Who would pay for this staffing? A particularly good question at a time when local officials are complaining about federal mandates they cannot afford to enact.

Local regulation would not reduce the use of pesticides. That must come from individual companies and employers. Can you imagine the difficulty of compliance if every city in the state of Iowa had its own separate legislation? I suggest state governments to pass a pesticide certificate exam and make pesticide certification exams more difficult and raise the requirements for continuing education credit. They currently have every right to do just that. Nothing means less — posted like billboards around a golf course — will do absolutely nothing towards pesticide use reduction. Pesticides are viable businesses in the state and that pesticides are applied by trained personnel. The issue of state pre-emption will now be decided in each state. It will be important that the golf industry makes itself heard.

Steven M. Cook, CGCS
Iowa Golf Course Superintendents Association

DOAK BACKS ASGCA PRESIDENT

To the editor:

I would like to note my agreement with the letter from architect Jerry Matthews printed in your January 1994 issue, with regard to your voting on the "Best Architect of the Year." I have the greatest respect for Tom Fazio, who was again named Architect of the Year, but I think that it does every architect, including Mr. Fazio, a disservice for you to have such an award.

Essentially, your voting is little more than a popularity contest in what is, unfortunately, increasingly a personality-driven business. Any equitable judging of golf course architecture must be made on a course-by-course basis, though even those judgments are biased by the designer's reputation and project budget. To vote on designers themselves tilts the playing field severely in favor of the handful who are household names and whose work is spread widely enough to be known to all your readers.

Few of us would pretend to challenge the output of Tom Fazio's office over the past several years. We only wish we'd had half the opportunities with spectacular sites and generous budgets that he's had.

But if you'd change your award to look at individual designs instead of business reputation, I think you'd have a much more competitive and meaningful award, instead of simply reinforcing the status quo.

Tom Doak, President
Renaissance Golf Design, Inc.