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Preemption of Local Pesticide Regulation

by Jeff Nack

I recently received a call from Mike Hart at the Danville Country Club regarding the issue of pre-emption of the local pesticide legislation. It seems that there is a movement started that will prevent small governing bodies from imposing more stringent rules than those of the federal government. He asked if there was any way that I could think of that would help bring the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) to support the pending legislation that will be introduced in Springfield. Their support will help to pass this important act for all golf courses interest.

As many of us are well aware, the U.S. Supreme Court declared last summer that local governments have the authority to set regulations that may be more stringent than those mandated by the FIFRA act. Imagine that ... more pesticide legislation, except this legislation could be based on the information from the T.V. talk shows, supermarket tabloids, and paranoid parents of newborn children. This could have tremendous implications on our industry and in our own or neighboring communities as well. If you stop to give this some consideration for a short spell and let your imagination take over, you can very well end up with some frightening visions. It is just such imaginative power that I would like you to stop and exercise ... do it now ... Now that you have imagined not being able to spray plant protectants, fertilize stressed plants or eradicate weeds from your property, try one more time with a little more energy on how this might impact the local taxing body for your home and place of work.

I have given Mike's request some significant thought and come up with the following suggestion. As educated users of chemical controls for plants, you can share that information with others. Give your local park district's executive director a call. Let him know that you are a conscientious user of pesticides just like his organization and that this potential legislation would definitely aid his business as well as yours. Give him your perspective on helping plants grow, so he could envision that without this legislation, he too might not fertilize his athletic fields, or maintain his districts latest beautification project. Ask him to give a call to the IAPD representative and support the pre-emption legislation. Try to get him to convey the idea that this type of costly regulation belongs in the hands of the scientific community, that can be monitored by the state and federal jurisdiction.

As individuals, we often feel that we don't wield as much power as some organized groups. Often this is true. However, this is an opportunity to influence an organization with your individual call.

Editor's Note: Be sure to read the article on page 6 which goes with Jeff's article above.