

# Mass. officials consider ground water regulations

## Pesticides could be banned near drinking supplies

By Peter Blais

Proposed ground water regulations in Massachusetts that could greatly affect the use of pesticides on Bay State golf courses have come under fire by the state's turfgrass industry.

The Massachusetts Pesticide Board has discussed banning 21 products from use within a half-mile radius of any drinking water supply. Among them are many used by the green industry, including the fungicide Chlorothalonil; herbicides Alachlor, Bentazon, Metolachlor and Simazine; nematocides Fenamiphos and Terbufos; and insecticides Disulfoton, Lindane and Terbufos.

The regulations are not based on scientific data, argued the Green Industry Council, which includes representatives from many of the state's golf courses. The organization made its feelings known in written comments and during three public hearings last fall.

"Research like the Cape Cod Study (which concluded there was no ground water contamination from golf course pesticides in that area) hasn't even been considered. There is so much research showing the positive effects of golf courses that should be looked at," said Charles Passios, vice president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England and head superintendent at Hyannisport Club.

The Pesticide Board will consider those and other comments when it meets Feb. 6. The board should develop a new set of regulations by this spring, according to Green Industry Council Executive Director Phyllis Gillespie.

"We hope the board recommends the regulations need further study when it meets this winter," she said.

In a position paper responding to proposed regulation 333 CMR 12.00 Protection of Public Drinking Water Supplies, the Green Industry writes: "The proposed regulation goes well beyond the scope of public safety, imposing severe and unfounded limitations on the use of pesticides by the green industry...the Green Industry Council maintains that applications made by professionals in the green industry, both foliar and to turf, pose no significant threat to our drinking water supplies.

"The Green Industry Council strongly urges the Department of Food and Agriculture to identify and regulate specific methods of application, practices and products rather than provide a blanket regulation which seriously impacts our industry and our advances in such areas as Integrated Pest Management."

The lack of scientific data used to develop the proposed regulation is one of the Green Industry Council's

major points of concern. The Council recommends a generic environmental impact report or a ground water monitoring program — considering current methods and rates of application and Massachusetts site conditions — be employed to determine the need and scope of the regulation.

The council is also bothered by the proposed regulations' use of the relatively new National Pesticide/Soils Database and User Decision Support System for Risk Assessment of Ground and Surface

Water Contamination Program to determine leaching potential. "The year-old program is still in the developmental stages, having not yet been field tested or able to effectively incorporate pertinent site variables," the position paper reads.

The regulation allows for a variance where no viable alternative is available. The variance requires extensive paperwork and can take up to 60 days to review. Variances must be renewed annually.

The council believes the 60-day decision period prevents an inte-

grated or best management approach and hinders the monitoring of pest populations, timing of application and rotation of products. The expense of obtaining a variance could far exceed the price of the job, it contends.

And "On golf courses and nurseries, where records demonstrate the need for treatments involving the same material on the same site each season, the annual renewal period is an unwarranted burden," the position paper reads.

In terms of pesticide alternatives,

the University of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension Service has provided the Department with a list of alternatives for the 21 pesticides. All the alternatives are another pesticide, the council found. And no alternatives were listed for a half-dozen of the would-be-banned products.

"The regulation fails to encourage Integrated Pest Management and, in many cases, puts the applicator and/or the environment at a significant risk by forcing the use of the alternative," the council stated.



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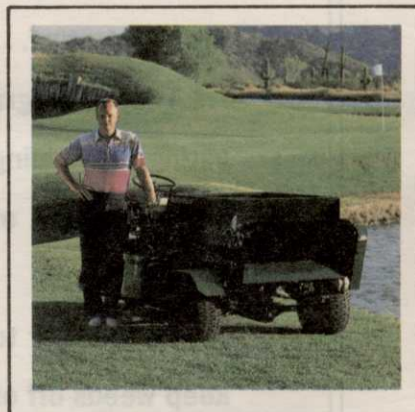
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