



# Speak Up for Product Choice

By **Elizabeth Gotos**, Grassroots Manager, RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment)\*

*Editors note: Elizabeth was our scheduled speaker at the June WGCSA meeting at Evergreen Golf Club that was flooded out. In place of speaking, Mrs. Gotos has submitted this valuable article regarding the turf industry.*

It's hard to believe that, amidst all the talk about "going green," the value of green space is being challenged. As a green industry professional, you understand the real benefits of well-managed and healthy turf and ornamentals. From improving air quality and

reducing carbon dioxide, to preventing runoff and providing a soft landing surface, grass and plantings provide tremendous environmental benefits ... not to mention improving property values and providing aesthetic and recreational benefits. Yet, there are a growing number of local restrictions and bans on the use of important pest management and plant health tools - pesticides and fertilizers.

Even though Wisconsin passed state pesticide preemption legislation (which rests pesticide regulatory authority with the Department

of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection where it belongs), there have been several local community challenges to state primacy for pesticides. For example, challenges to herbicide use for invasive weed control in lakes can be found around the state.

In the fertilizer arena, Dane and Jefferson counties have passed restrictions on phosphorus-containing fertilizer use and the cities of Madison, Oconomowoc, Pewaukee, Delafield, Twin Lakes and Portage have followed suit. Your state legislature considered a

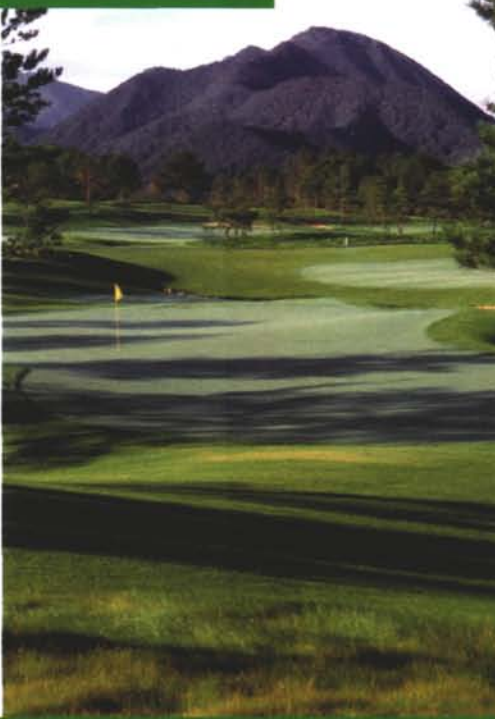
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statewide "phosphorus fertilizer ban" bill last session. Industry advocates pushed the state fertilizer regulatory authority to stop the patchwork of inconsistent local ordinances being passed around the state.

#### What can be done?

RISE established a grassroots advocacy program in 2006. We have two dedicated staff people focused on supporting grassroots activities by green industry professionals like you. We have a host of resources available for your use including talking points for hearing testimony, letters to the editor and tips for meeting with local elected officials. We also target communication materials for particular local situations.

#### Your help is needed

RISE needs you to join its grassroots network! Participation in the network simply involves the commitment to monitor local issues and to engage if pesticide and fertilizer use is challenged. Contact Elizabeth Grotos, RISE grassroots manager, at 202-872-3869 or [egrotos@pestfacts.org](mailto:egrotos@pestfacts.org) to join the network.

Network members receive our quarterly newsletter, Grassroots Network News, as well as regular updates outlining industry trends and providing helpful resource materials. If a local issue arises, we notify network members and recommend action.


Success in our grassroots efforts, however, relies on two-way communication. We need your help in monitoring local level activities and proposals. Some suggestions for doing this include: reading the local paper, listening to local radio broadcasts and watching local television newscasts. I encourage you to get in the habit of monitoring the meeting minutes and agendas for your town council, county board and school board groups. This information is often readily available

online. You may also be able to subscribe to an email distribution list so you will be notified of upcoming meetings and activities.

Talk with your management and players about the importance of availability of pest management and plant health products and the benefits of maintaining healthy and robust playing surfaces.

Set up a meeting with your local elected officials. A simple one-hour meeting can reap tremendous dividends over time because the legislator will now have an industry expert to call if a proposal is introduced.

I hope that you feel as passionately about this industry as I do - and that you are willing to tell the good story about pesticide and fertilizer benefits to elected officials, customers, neighbors and friends. We are seeing the consequences of not speaking up.

RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment)<sup>®</sup> is the national not-for-profit association representing manufacturers, formulators, distributors and other industry leaders involved with specialty pesticide and fertilizer products. Visit [www.pestfacts.org](http://www.pestfacts.org). 



Yes, please add me to the RISE Grassroots Network!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (most important!): \_\_\_\_\_

List states of interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:

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