

## Golf's Environmental Impact Studied by Senate Group

The Senate Subcommittee on Toxic Substances, Environmental Oversight, Research and Development convened recently to examine the use, regulation and potential health risk of commercially applied chemicals on turfgrass.

William R. Roberts, CGCS, secretary/treasurer of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), testified on behalf of the golf course industry.

**Roberts, a golf course superintendent at Lochmoor Club**, Grosse Pointe Woods, Mich., was invited to represent the 9,800 members of GCSAA. Also appearing were other experts in the field of environmental research and education. Subcommittee chairman Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) invited Roberts and GCSAA to appear because of GCSAA's recognized leadership in the field of turf management and research.

In summarizing Roberts' testimony, Reid said, "I have been very impressed, for example, with Mr. Roberts, who represents people who have concerns. . . (and) think there should be more research that goes on and is willing to abide by whatever comes out of it."

Reid went on to note that senators like himself can help in that process, by saying that ". . . you (GCSAA) don't have a dog in this fight, and you're just trying to find out, as we are, what is valid and invalid about the claims, and hopefully the government has a role to help you in that regard."

**Roberts highlighted two areas in which GCSAA is considered to be the golf industry leader: groundwater research and educational programs.**

"Our concerns deal with the health and safety of the public, the golfers, and ultimately with the environment that we live in. . ." Roberts said. "We are willing, frankly, to put our money where our mouths are. We are going to do this research. . . with no preconceptions. . . and if we find out that the materials or management practices are scientifically valid, we'll continue to use those. If we find out that those materials or management practices could adversely affect the environment or the public, we're determined to find solutions or alternatives so that we can maintain good golf courses and yet not impact the public."

A recent study completed at Cape Cod, Mass., showed that, when used properly, virtually no turf chemicals move through the soil structure into groundwater and that golf courses that employ best management practices in their application of turf chemicals can greatly minimize the risk of potential groundwater leaching.



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