

NEWS+VIEWS

GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS, TRENDS AND TIPS

Labor, pesticides top Day on the Hill issues

BY RON HALL EDITOR-AT-LARGE

On July 20, about 80 landscape/lawn service company owners and managers traversed the halls of the Senate and House office buildings in Washington D.C. to educate legislators on issues affecting landscaping businesses.

Not unexpectedly, the two issues foremost on the visitors' minds were labor and pesticides. Specifically, they urged lawmakers to support the H-2B seasonal guest worker program — and to increase the number of visas available to foreign H-2B workers. They also petitioned legislators to reign in pesticide provisions being considered for the Clean Water Act, and to modify the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's

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The Green Industry donates labor, equipment and product to maintain and beautify Arlington National Cemetery.

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(EPA's) proposal for zero spray drift for pesticide applications.

The group was part of the 505 volunteers (450 adults, 55 children) working in the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET) Renewal and Remembrance project at Arlington National Cemetery the previous morning. One hundred companies sent volunteers who provided more than \$250,000 in fertilization, aerification, soil modification, planting and tree services at the 146-year-old, 634-acre military cemetery.

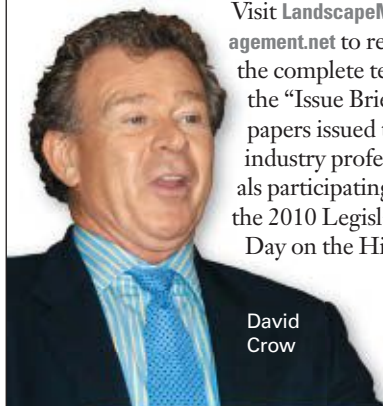
While Renewal and Remembrance has grown into one of PLANET's most popular annual events, its Legislative Day on the Hill, which takes place the following day, was the reason 20 years ago why Green Industry professionals gathered here for learning and lobbying annually in the first place.

"Zero is a very small number," says David T. Crow, president of DC Legislative & Regulatory Services, regarding the EPA proposal to limit spray drift. Crow, who spoke to the PLANET volunteers prior to their Hill visits, said the proposal, if approved, could subject lawn application companies to lawsuits.

"The EPA is going farther than it should go," he told attendees, advising the audience to ask legislators and staffers to modify both this regulation and one in the Endangered Species Act (ESA) establishing 20-yard buffer zones for ground applications of pesticides along waterways in much of the Pacific Northwest in an effort to protect salmon.

Crow urged landscape and lawn care professionals to "encourage" the EPA to develop reasonable approaches to spray drift and endangered species protection that allow lawn care companies to continue to use the pesticide tools needed to maintain lawns, athletic fields and other green spaces that provide significant benefits to local communities.

Visit LandscapeManagement.net to read the complete text of the "Issue Briefing" papers issued to industry professionals participating in the 2010 Legislative Day on the Hill.



David Crow

PHOTOS BY: RON HALL

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