



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
House of Representatives  
State House, Boston 02133-1054

CARMINE L. GENTILE  
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Vice Chair  
Joint Committee on Higher Education  
  
Committees:  
Environment and Natural Resources  
State Administration  
and Regulatory Oversight  
Elder Affairs

May 10, 2023

Representative Daniel Cahill, Chair  
Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
State House, Room 527A  
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Rebecca Rausch, Chair  
Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
State House, Room 218  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Cahill and Chair Rausch,

I write to you in support of my sponsored legislation H.814 and the Senate counterpart S.540, filed by Senator Moran, *An act empowering towns and cities to protect residents and the environment from harmful pesticides*. Put simply, these bills would make the state's pesticide restrictions a floor for regulation rather than a ceiling by giving municipalities the choice to further restrict pesticide use through a vote of their legislative body.

This committee has heard testimony on many occasions about chemicals like neonicotinoids and glyphosate which are causing damage to our Commonwealth's natural environment. The choice of when and how to restrict these chemicals is a subject that requires complex trade-offs. In such cases, it is often best to defer to communities to make such decisions for themselves, based on their specific needs and values.

This is especially true given that different municipalities in the Commonwealth have different levels of sensitivity to pesticide use based on factors such as population density, agricultural practices, or ecological considerations. For example, local communities may have particular ecosystems, water bodies, or endangered species that require enhanced safeguards. Furthermore, when local issues arise, state government may not be able to respond in time to mitigate the harmful effects of these chemicals.

Crucially, this bill would encourage innovation and experimentation at the local level. Communities can explore alternative pest and weed management strategies and pilot these approaches for other communities, and the state at large. There are many towns and cities where

more restrictive local regulations would pass quickly, providing crucial data and information for the state on the efficacy of banning or restricting a certain chemical.

Local health boards, town meetings and city councils should have control of the chemicals sprayed on their lands and be able to protect the needs of their unique communities. Similar legislation ending state preemption and empowering local communities has been adopted in 7 other states.

I respectfully request a favorable report from the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. I am happy to answer any questions from the Committee and engage in further discussion on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carmine L. Gentile", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carmine L. Gentile  
State Representative  
13th Middlesex District