



May 3, 2021

Subject: Written testimony submitted in opposition to LD 1599 “An Act To Establish A Maine Pesticide Sales and Use Registry”

Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry,

Mainely Grass is a Maine-based, family-owned Lawn Care and Pest Control company with a 20-year history working in the state of Maine. Over half of our business is in Maine and a number of our employees—myself included—call Maine home. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to LD 1599.

As a commercial applicator, Mainely Grass already complies with a litany of both Federal and State regulations including the submission of reports summarizing the usage of pesticides in Maine. The reporting requirements proposed in LD 1599 are extreme, impractical, and harmful for the following reasons:

First, LD 1599 calls for reports to contain Personal Identifiable Information (PII) of the applicators themselves including name, e-mail, mailing address, and phone number. Publicly listing such information goes against stringent regulations mandating that PII for employees be protected. Giving the public at large access to personal information of individuals performing licensed work is as misguided as it is dangerous.

Second, LD 1599 calls for reporting of pesticide use to preempt the use itself starting January 1, 2024. The requirement to report usage *before* an application is made runs directly counter to the principles of Integrated Pest Management which makes use of control products only when necessary. There is no way to perfectly forecast pest pressure until a licensed professional is on site to evaluate the conditions. Ironically, paragraph 4 of LD 1599 is titled “Integrated Pest Management” yet the language in paragraph 3 would negate the application of such a methodology.

Thirdly, commercial applicators make up the minority of pesticide use in the state. The homeowner (or “Do-it-Yourself”) market is estimated to be bigger than the professional market by a wide margin. A survey performed by Lawn & Landscape Magazine¹ indicated that a mere 15% of households hire a professional to perform lawn, tree, or shrub care specifically. This means that 85% of the market for potential pesticide use occurs with do-it-yourself-ers, not licensed professionals. If a detailed account of pesticide use in the state is of so much interest and importance, why is there no accounting for use from the non-professional segment of the market?

For these reasons, I encourage the committee to vote “ought not to pass” on LD 1599.

Sincerely,

Palmer Higgins
CEO, Mainely Grass

References:

1. <https://www.lawnandlandscape.com/article/110813-grow-market-homeowner-survey/>

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