

From: Nash, Brooke
Sent: October 12, 2006
To: Todd Chadwell
Subject: comments on Application ID 014:

I am writing to voice my support for a proposal submitted to the Mass SubCouncil by the Center for Ecological Technology, called "Less Toxic Landscapes - a Healthier Housatonic" (Application ID: 014).

I am a Branch Chief at MassDEP in the Bureau of Waste Prevention. Over the past 12 years, MassDEP has collaborated with, and awarded numerous grants to the Center for Ecological Technology for a variety of environmental protection initiatives, with excellent results. CET is known for pioneering successful public education efforts such as promoting home composting and distributing over 5,000 backyard compost bins in 1994, a pilot "grassroots" program that led to our statewide compost bin distribution program. This program illustrates the large overall impact that collective action by individuals can have over time, a reasonable model for the long term impact of pesticide reduction by individuals - at the time, many people were skeptical that there would be a measurable impact on the waste stream from home composting.

CET initiated a healthy landscaping public education campaign a few years ago, one of the first in the state, which has since been replicated successfully in other parts of the state. MassDEP launched it's own "Healthy Lawn and Landscapes" program 3 years ago, to help meet the demand for public information about alternatives to pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Demand for these workshops far exceeds our ability to fulfill them. We receive over 30 requests per year from cities and towns, and are limited to serving 8 per year. Visit <http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/mwrgap07.doc> for more information.

In the overall effort to reduce pesticide use by the public, outreach and education are the key methods available, barring local bylaws outlawing such use. Passage of such bylaws is dependent on an educated population. While the results of public education are not always quantifiable, good quality outreach and education are still necessary to effect changes in public behavior. That is why I believe that CET's proposal to the Housatonic River Natural Resource Restoration program is so worthwhile, and should be funded.

The amount of advertising conducted by the pesticide industry is far greater than the readily available information on ecological landscaping practices, so all public outreach avenues should be utilized. That is why DEP provides workshops to the public on how to maintain healthy lawns and landscapes. We strongly support similar efforts in the Housatonic River watershed, since it is impossible for DEP to cover such wide spread areas of the state.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Brooke Nash
Branch Chief, Municipal Waste Reduction Program Bureau of Waste
Prevention Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection